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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ONE CHILD'S GROWTH IN LITERACY

by

(C) MAUREEN ELIZABETH SANDERS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1986

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "One Child's Growth In Literacy", submitted by Maureen Elizabeth Sanders in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Grace Maloney
(Supervisor)

A. Thomson Craig

D. H. Clayden

Date: Sept. 25, 1986

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents who nurtured my literacy and to Claire who enabled it to grow.

ABSTRACT

There has recently been considerable research interest in exploring the connections between reading and writing and in examining, within natural environments, the social and cultural aspects of literacy, as well as the linguistic and cognitive processes. The purpose of this study was to describe the continuing literacy development of one seven year old child from the perspective of the home situation. The study was based on naturalistic observations of the researcher's daughter over a one year period. The focus was on the links that this child made between reading and writing and upon the meaning that she brought to these activities and the meaning that they brought to her life.

In order to give some sense of the experiences affecting Claire's early literacy growth the first phase of the study comprised a description of the life context of the child. Literacy development was deemed to have been somewhat uneven during Claire's early years. Her experiences with reading were very positive, she enjoyed reading, and was beginning to read independently. Her experiences with writing were more varied and she had adopted some fairly negative attitudes towards this aspect of literacy.

Data in the active research stage were collected by means of observation, note-taking, audio recording, and informal interviewing. The findings of the study showed considerable growth in Claire's literacy over a one year

period. Growth in reading was consistent and steady as she continued to enjoy reading and to read often. Her sure sense of control in this area, and the connectedness she felt between reading and her own life allowed her to read in her own style, for her own purposes and pleasures. When reading purely for pleasure, she adopted a critical stance towards some of the books that she was reading, particularly on second and subsequent readings. Thus, a cognitive response was seen to be closely linked to an affective one.

In writing, growth was more sporadic. Initially, Claire expressed negative attitudes towards writing and her concerns were largely with the conventional aspects of handwriting, spelling and punctuation. She seemed confused too about its nature and purposes. Some change was evident throughout the year with writing even becoming a chosen activity. Claire's changing attitude appeared to relate closely to the social context within which writing occurred, and to the degree to which she was able to take control over her own writing.

The findings of this study also supported the view that reading and writing are similar acts of composing. In many respects, the act of reading was more often a constructive and creative act for Claire than was the act of writing, although much depended on intentionality in both areas. The fundamental importance of the social context to both reading and writing was clearly seen. Growth in literacy seemed related to the extent to which it was integrated in real and meaningful ways into the child's life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to our daughter Claire for her willingness to participate in this study. Her enthusiasm as a reader and writer, and her reflections on her experiences, taught me so much - about her literacy as well as my own.

To my advisor Dr. Grace Malicky, who was so generous with her time and who provided just the right combination of confidence in my work and questioning of my thinking, I am especially thankful. Her encouragement and consistent good humour were greatly appreciated in the long writing process.

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To all the friends who shared both the lows and the highs of graduate work, and particularly to Nadia Hochachka for her many hours of helpful discussion and critical reading, I extend my warmest thanks.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A Day In The Life Of Claire

Saturday January 4, 1986.

Claire came into our bedroom this morning, as she often does on a weekend morning. It was the second last day of the Christmas holidays, a Saturday, and the whole family had slept later than usual. Claire had her book Ramona Forever in her hand as she climbed into bed beside me. She didn't open the book though, but just lay there quietly for a few minutes. Since I was still half asleep I was only dimly aware of her presence until she suddenly asked, "Liverpool Miss, what's that?" "Mmm?" I murmured. "Liverpool Miss, what is it?" I opened my eyes to see her gazing at the bookcase beside my bed. "Oh", I mumbled "That's a book about a young girl who grew up in Liverpool, in England. She was very poor and went through lots of hard times." I hoped that brief answer would satisfy whatever curiosity had prompted the question but Claire persisted, "Yes, but what does Miss mean?" Reluctantly, I gave up hope of further sleep, and explained, "It means a young girl or a young woman." "Oh, I see, not like miss something, miss the bus or miss school?" "No" I agreed, "That's not what it means here."

Realizing that she now had my attention, Claire, age seven and the youngest of our three daughters, then said "I

always lie here and look at your books and that one always jumps out at me. So does the one next to it -- Why Children Fail. What's that one about?" This book had been on my bookshelf so long that I barely even noticed it any more, but it too had the title clearly printed on its spine. "Oh that's about why some children don't do well in school -or at least that author's ideas about why children don't do well." I explained. "Like the men you were reading about yesterday, in that paper?" she said thoughtfully. I recalled the interest that Claire had shown, the previous day, in a paper that I was reading on the topic of reading disability. She had wondered why I was marking certain parts of the article as I read it, and had helped me for a while by underlining the segments that I pointed out to her. She was concerned about the three men who were discussed in the article and we had talked about their problem for perhaps fifteen minutes before she wandered away to read her own book. I was surprised to hear her make this connection and answered "Yeh, that's right, that book says some of the same kinds of things that the article said."

By now my husband, Esmond, had got up to make some breakfast, and he then went to bring in the newspaper. Hearing him open the front door, Claire called out "Dad, can I have the comics, and no reading them first!" He brought them in to her with a grin, and she propped herself up on two pillows, spread the comic section of The Edmonton Journal out on the quilt and began to read. I watched as she carefully

read some cartoons and flipped past others. It was my turn now to ask questions. "Which comics do you like to read?" Claire smiled as she looked back to the first page. "I like 'Calvin & Hobbes' and 'Peanuts.' I always read 'Hi and Lois' and 'Blondie.' I like 'Dennis the Menace' too." "How about Herman?" I asked as she turned the page. "No, not usually. I don't understand it." she said. "I think you might enjoy this one... " I suggested. Claire scanned the cartoon quickly, her eyes went back over the six panels again, and she laughed. "Yeh I get that" she said. "Oh look, I always read 'Marmaduke and Heathcliff' too...But this is my favourite, 'For Better or For Worse'." "Yes" I agreed, "I like that one, I think the whole family enjoys it".

We finished reading the comics together and then got up for breakfast. Claire brought her book to the table, as she often does, while Es and I read the newspaper. After she had finished her bowl of Cheerios, she came and stood by my side, looking over my shoulder. I was reading the editorial page on which there was an article about Ronald Reagan, with a picture beside it. After a minute or so she said, "Do people like Ronald Reagan?" "Well a lot of people in the United States seem to" I replied, "Because he's been elected President of that country twice. Some people don't like him very much though because he doesn't always seem to know what he's talking about. He makes dumb mistakes about important things. Also he's very anti-Russian. He sees the Russians

as the bad guys and the Americans as the good guys and that's a very simple minded way of looking at things."

Catherine, 12 years old and our middle child, had just wandered in from her bedroom and she said "Oh he's ethnocentric!" and grinned knowingly. "Ethno what?" asked Claire. "Ethnocentric, it means he thinks his culture is the best and everyone else's is no good. We did that in Social, all about cultures." "Did you discuss Reagan?" I asked. "No, not really, but from what you just said it sounded like he's ethnocentric." Catherine answered. Claire went back to her original line of questioning. "Well do you like Reagan?" I didn't have to think too long before replying, "No I don't, for the reasons that I just mentioned. I also don't like the way he spends more and more money on weapons and then has to cut back in areas like education and services that help people." Claire considered my answer for a few seconds and asked a third question, "Will he get elected again?" This one was a little more straightforward to answer. "No, he's only allowed to be President for two terms, so they'll have to choose someone else next time."

She seemed satisfied with this information and said nothing more until I turned the page. Next was the religion page, and a large headline soon caught her eye, 'Hail Mary Cleaner Than Disney'. Most children of course are familiar with the name Disney and Claire is also familiar with the traditional Catholic prayer, the Hail Mary. She was intrigued to see the two names mentioned in the same context

and immediately asked "What's that about?" Knowing something already of the controversy over the showing of the Jean-Luc Godard movie at a local theatre, I quickly scanned the article and told her, "It's about a film which is supposed to be a modern version of the birth of Jesus. A lot of people didn't like the film, they said it was offensive because of the way the characters were portrayed-" Claire interrupted, "What's offensive?" "Something that offends people, upsets them" I replied. "Some Catholics thought it made fun of their religion and they thought it should be banned. Anyway, the man who wrote this article went to see it and he says that he thought it wasn't offensive or bad. In fact he says it was no more offensive than Disney films. So that's how they got the headline for that article." "Have you seen it?" she wanted to know. "No, so I don't know whether I'd agree with him or not. But I usually agree with a lot of things he says. I think he's a good writer and I respect his opinions."

Then, changing the subject completely, Claire suddenly said "I want to do some stirring." "Pardon?" I was surprised by the abrupt change of topic. "Some stirring", she repeated "I want to make something." "O.K. How about a cake mix?" I suggested. "Yeah" she agreed easily, wandering over to the cupboard to see what she could find. "Here's a chocolate one, (reading the side of the box). It needs three eggs, oil and water." "Oh" I said "I just remembered, we ran out of eggs yesterday and I forgot to get some more. See if

there´s anything else you can make" This announcement didn´t seem to faze her at all and she returned to rummaging in the cupboard. "How about a jello pudding mix?" she tried next. We agreed that since it only needed the addition of milk we could manage that alright. Claire got out the mixing bowls, spoons and milk while I read the newspaper for a few minutes longer, and I then helped her to measure out the milk. She wondered next whether we could make it in the microwave oven, a new addition and thus a source of experimentation in the household. This necessitated some further exploration in the microwave cookbook. Claire looked for ´jello´ in the index and unable to find it handed the book to me. After I found the recipe listed under ´puddings´, and she had turned to the correct page, she read through the instructions and said "That sounds easy, you just have to stir after three minutes." She mixed the package contents and milk together and set the oven timer for eight minutes and then watched as the seconds blinked away. Initially she had difficulty understanding that three minutes had not elapsed when the clock reached 5.59 but that she must wait for those 59 seconds to pass too. After a couple of false starts though, she seemed to grasp it. When she had poured the pudding into several dessert dishes Claire wandered downstairs to see what Catherine was up to, and they played with lego for the rest of the morning.

After lunch, which included jello pudding, I suggested to Claire that she write another thankyou letter for

Christmas gifts. Ever since her eldest sister Rachel, now 15, was a pre-schooler, I have encouraged the practice of writing 'thankyous' and other occasional letters to relatives. Since most of these relatives are in England it is a way of keeping in touch with family members who are only seen every couple of years and so often seem quite remote to the children. The two older girls now write these letters with little prompting from me, but Claire still finds it rather a chore and needs considerable encouragement. Today, however, she accepted my suggestion quite readily and knelt at the coffee table to write. I sat close by on the sofa, and began a letter of my own. After a short while though, I picked up my notebook instead and began recording my observations of this half hour writing episode.

Taking a card from a box designated for this purpose, Claire opened it up and first of all used a ruler to draw her own lines to the bottom of the page. Then she promptly wrote 'Love from Claire' at the bottom of the card. Only the day before she had asked "Do I have to fill the whole page?" to which I had replied "Just write as much as you want to." Her intentions, it seemed, were evident from the start today. Moving back to the top of the page, she wrote 'Dear Anty' and asked "How do you spell Theresa?" Despite my resolve to ignore spelling errors, old habits die hard and I found myself saying "You've missed a letter out in Aunty, do you know what it is?" Almost immediately Claire said 'u' and squeezed it in between the 'A' and the 'n'. She then

repeated her request for the spelling of Theresa and after I had given it to her she said "Can I start a different way instead of "Thankyou for the ..." I said that of course she could and she began to write again.

Over the next half hour, Claire continued to ask a number of questions as she wrote. She had some concerns about repeating the same word in consecutive sentences, because it didn't "sound good". She continually checked with me for spellings and expressed confusion about the 'doubling-the-end-consonant-when-you-add-'ing' rule. She wondered also about the possibility of starting a sentence with 'Because' saying, "I know you're not supposed to but can I?" As she wrote she re-read what she had written every five or six words. At times she seemed to lose her concentration and would fiddle with her doll's hair or twirl her dress. At one point she came over to where I was sitting and remarked "You always write in that book on your lap." "Yes", I said "It's my work." "You look cosy sitting there with your feet curled up" she said, before going back to her letter.

Before she finished she had asked about the spellings of a couple of other words, had enquired whether 'thanks' had an apostrophe, and wished she could write as fast as I did. This led to a conversation about the difficulties of learning cursive writing and Claire bemoaned the fact that she only got 'sevens' for handwriting at school. When she had filled up all of the lines she had drawn in at the beginning, she re-read her letter to me, pronounced it "O.K." and began to

play with her doll. Then, out of the blue, Claire suddenly said "Where the heck's the toilet plunger gone?" We laughed together, recognizing the line from a poem in Shel Silverstein's Where the Sidewalk Ends. Claire said "I want to see how it goes" and went off to her bedroom to get the book. She spent the next 20 minutes leafing through the book and picked out a number of her favourite poems, some of which she read to anyone who happened to be in the room and who showed the slightest inclination to listen.

A little later, Claire began to read her Ramona book again and at one point looked up and said "Dad, can I ask you a silly question? Don't laugh will you?" "Of course not" he reassured her. "Well, do you like your job?" Claire asked. "Yes I do" Es replied, "Why do you ask?" Looking a little hesitant she said, "Well, what would you do if you lost it?" "That's not really very likely. But I suppose if it did happen I'd look for another one. Maybe I'd even find something else I like to do." Es said casually. "That's what happened to Ramona's Dad" said Claire, "And he had to take a job that he hated in a supermarket, and her Mom had to get a full-time job and then Ramona had to be baby-sat at Howie's Grandma's house. She didn't like that." Es said "Well that was tough on Ramona wasn't it, but I'm pretty lucky in my job. You don't get fired or laid off very often in my kind of work." "Mmm" she murmured and went back to her reading.

Later that day, after supper, Es remembered about the 'Fawlty Towers' quiz that he and Rachel had made up the evening before. The quiz consisted of 50 questions based on 10 of the British 'Fawlty Towers' comedy programs that they had spent a good deal of time watching over the holidays. The girls planned to send the quiz, as a joke, to their Uncle who had brought the tapes of the programs with him when he came to visit. Catherine and Claire pored over the questions for about 45 mins or longer trying, first of all, to match each question with its appropriate program, and then to come up with a feasible answer. Later, Claire gleefully repeated some of the questions to her Dad from memory, along with her suggested answers.

Towards bedtime while tidying Claire's room, I found some pieces of paper which had lines of what appeared to be imitation writing on them. Curious as to the purpose of these papers I said to her "I found this in your room do you need it?" "Oh no" she said "That was just from a game I played with Jenny." (her friend who was over the previous day). I pressed her a little further, "What game were you playing?" "Oh nothing" she shrugged, "Just a game". So I left it there and decided to ask again later if the opportunity arose. As she was getting ready for bed, I found another piece of the scribble writing. "Here's some more of that paper. Do you want to keep it?" I asked again. "No we've finished with it." Claire answered. "It looks like writing, were you playing school?" I tried. "No, not really.

Well, older than that." she told me. "Oh you mean pretending to be in High school?" I was even more intrigued by now. "No, older." "Ah, University?" At this point she grinned and said "Yeah, we were pretending to write exams."

Claire ended the day, as she began it, with her Ramona book in her hand. She read for a little over half an hour and finished the book which she had started a couple of days earlier. I heard her jump out of bed and then she appeared in the living room, unable to resist telling me "I've finished it Mum. It's a really good book. You have to read it!"

At Day's End

Once Claire was finally settled in bed, I followed my usual routine of sitting down at the computer in order to write up my day's observations in more detail. I was struck all at once, not only by the quantity, but also by the variety of literacy interactions that I had observed that day. It was now over six months since I had begun my study of my seven year old daughter's interactions with print within the home context, so it no longer surprised me that almost every day there were relevant observations to be made regarding her growth as a reader and writer. But this particular day certainly seemed to have offered a wealth of data to be pondered over, analysed, and made sense of.

The insights I gained and continue to gain each time I examine the data will be shared in later chapters. For the introduction to this study, however, I considered it

important for the reader to gain an initial glimpse into one day in the literacy life of the child who is the subject of the study. This somewhat condensed view allows an overall perspective that can easily be lost when we zoom in closely to study and analyse individual instances and examples. That is not to say that examining the "exotic minutiae" (Geertz, 1974, p.235) is not of equal importance. Indeed, as Geertz says, in describing what Dilthey called the hermeneutic circle, "Hopping back and forth between the whole conceived through the parts that actualize it and the parts conceived through the whole that motivates them, we seek to turn them, by a sort of intellectual perpetual motion, into explications of one other." (p.235). This initial view of the whole serves, I hope, to give some sense of the rhythm and tone of Claire's life as she readily and easily integrates literacy events with all of the other activities and events of her everyday existence.

Purpose And Organization Of The Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the continuing development of literacy of one seven year old child, from the perspective of the home situation. The study will be based on observations of my own daughter. In particular, I hope to describe the links that this child makes between reading and writing. I also wish to explore the ways that her experiences with reading and writing bring meaning to her

life and how she brings her own meaning to literacy activities.

In order to provide a context for the more active research stage of this study, the first phase consists of a description of Claire's development in reading and writing in her pre-school years and in her first two years at school. As well as describing her early experiences with written language there is also some analysis of product, that is, art work of various kinds and written work ranging from early scribbles to stories, letters etc. This will provide a context for the second stage of data collection which focusses upon both product and process of reading and writing activities, and upon the meaning that these activities bring to Claire's life. This stage covers a period of approximately one year, between Claire's seventh and eighth birthdays.

Limitations And Delimitations Of The Study

1. Because this is a study of only one child, results of the study are not generalizable to all children.
2. Because of the intimacy of relationship with the subject of my study there may be difficulty in maintaining objectivity in my descriptions or analyses of situations and events.
3. The study is further restricted by the limited amount of data on early literacy development available for analysis, particularly in the area of reading.

Significance Of The Study

In considering the significance of a case study of this kind I must echo the words of Lucy McCormick Calkins, "Susie is representative of all children in that she, too, is unique" (Calkins, 1983 p.7). One of the most important tasks for us as teachers is, I believe, to be able to arrive at this understanding. If we can only begin to overlook the universal pooling together of children into particular age groups, or ability levels, or socio-economic classes or aptitude groups, and see in each child a unique capacity and inherent desire to learn and grow, then perhaps we will have gone a long way towards recognizing what is common and generalizable to all children. Understanding of this kind is gained only through being alert, sensitive and open to the possibilities in each child. It is my hope that this study will provide one means by which interested educators can gain some insights into what literacy means for one child and to make links with their own experiences, their own observations of similar unique children, thereby extracting their own significance.

It is my hope also that my study will contribute to the growing body of literature in the field of literacy development. So little is known about the links between reading and writing, particularly at levels beyond the earliest achievements in literacy, that there is a need for studies of all kinds which attempt to describe these links.

Perhaps the greatest significance of this research lies in the potential it presents for my own learning. The detailed nature of the study and the necessity for close observation of one child provides many opportunities for that child to teach me a great deal about how she learns and grows - as a reader, as a writer and as a person.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Among the many decisions to be made in presenting a piece of research is the structure or format of the presentation. My own preference is to present a general research background to the study at this point and to include literature which is specific to the data being presented at relevant points in the description. Thus, at the end of Chapter IV and after the presentation of the major themes in Chapter V a discussion of major observations and literature related to those observations will be presented. In this chapter, I will focus on literature which relates to the type of research I did, and this will allow the reader to obtain an overview of my own starting point for the study. As well, it is relevant to include a summary of my theoretical framework of how a child learns to read and write so that the reader might understand the assumptions and biases that I brought to the research.

The Parent As Researcher

The notion of studying one's own child, is hardly a new concept to educational research. Among the eminent scholars who observed their own children in language development studies were Darwin (1877) and Piaget (1955, 1976). In the field of anthropology, Scollon and Scollon (1981) compared the language development and growth in literacy of their own

child with that of the children in the Athabaskan Indian community. Ruth Weir, in her classic Language in the Crib (1962), provided an extensive analysis of her child's growth in oral language and more recently Halliday (1975) observed the oral language development of his son Nigel interpreting it as the "learning of a system of meanings" (p.8).

The valuable knowledge gained from studies of children learning oral language in natural home settings was extended into the reading and writing areas as literacy began to be seen as an extension of language development itself. In the area of research related to the written word, one of the earliest accounts of a child interacting with books was written by Dorothy White (1954), who kept a diary of her daughter's responses to their shared book reading over a period of 3 years. Not only did this account provide an engaging description of one child's response to literature, but it also emphasised the importance of the role of the parent in shared reading experiences. In 1975, Dorothy Butler did an in-depth study of her granddaughter, which described the remarkable achievements of a severely handicapped child whose parents gave her a highly book-enriched environment. James Britton (1970, 1982), drew on many examples of his 2 daughters' oral and written language to illustrate his concepts of language and learning. Also, in 1983, Crago and Crago wrote an analytical description of their daughter's experiences with, and response to,

picture books and stories between the ages of one and five years.

As the 1980's progress, parent-as-researcher studies have become still more acceptable as a valid means of building knowledge about literacy development. One such researcher quoted Fowler who, in 1962, wrote that "No other person will ever know the child, the context of the child's life, and the particular research situation so completely as the parent" (Baghban, 1984, p.8). Marcia Baghban decided that "an infant encountering print was as basic as an investigation of literacy could go" (p.8), and studied her daughter in this capacity for the first 3 years of her life, revealing that by the time she was 3 years of age this child had already learned a great deal about reading and writing. Other similar parent studies were done in conjunction with the large research study on the language stories and literacy lessons of 3 to 6 year olds by Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984). Lass (1982, 1983) also described the reading growth of her son as he progressed from story sharing and recitation of nursery rhymes and other frequently read books to a closer focussing on print itself. Finally, in looking at reading and writing activities in her study of 6 different families, Taylor (1983) also drew on examples and experiences with her own daughter. Especially pertinent to my own research however, is Glenda Bissex' study of her son Paul (Bissex, 1980). This research, which began as a mother's "propensity for writing things down" (p. vi), continued over a period of

5 years and provided valuable insights into both the early and continuing development of one child as a reader and writer.

Each of these studies has become part of a growing body of literature which has given us new understandings of both the commonalities and the idiosyncrasies of literacy development in young children. To date, however, with the exception perhaps of the Bissex study, most of these home studies have observed children in the early stages of their growth in reading and writing. There have been no other studies as comprehensive as that of Bissex which take both reading and writing into account in children who have progressed beyond the initial stages of literacy, and which use naturalistic observations by parents in the home context. Indeed, there is a continuing need for studies which describe literacy growth from this perspective.

A Theoretical Framework

Since who and what we are inevitably affects not only what we see and how we interpret it but also the very things we choose to study, it is important that readers be given some sense of how the "principal research instrument" (Pelto, 1970, p.90) views the world, in this case the world of education, and especially the teaching and learning of reading and writing.

The Plowden Report (Children and Their Primary Schools) published in Britain in 1967, was a major influence on the

formation of my own theoretical framework of education generally. Appearing during my final year of teacher education it had a profound impact in affirming for me the concept of a child being central to his or her own education. This report was based on sound theoretical principles, drawing as it did upon the work of, among others, Rousseau, Dewey, and particularly of Piaget. Each of these scholars held similar views of the nature of childhood and learning.

How Children Learn

The work of cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget, was perhaps the most instrumental in initially shaping my thinking about how children learn. Piaget's (1968) most important contribution to contemporary education is his view of a child actively constructing his or her own world through a process of accommodation to and assimilation of experiences. Although Piaget recognizes that mental development takes place in a complex interplay between the child and surroundings, he emphasises that learning is first and foremost an active process on the part of the individual. Piaget also maintains that all children progress through the same developmental stages, which are roughly related to age. Although Piaget does not extend his theories of learning specifically to the area of literacy, many researchers including Britton (1970), Ferreiro & Teberosky (1982), and Wells (1981), have done and continue to do so.

While Piagetian principles are now widely accepted as the basis for child-centred learning, a number of other researchers have both extended and also challenged Piaget's thinking. Where Piaget (1955) views thought as affecting language development rather than vice versa, Vygotsky (1962) places a much greater emphasis on the important role of language in developing thought. More recently, Bruner (1966) has agreed that language does influence the development of thought and sees also that the strategies children acquire as they learn language can then be abstracted and used in other learning situations and hence can contribute to further development of thought structures. These psychologists, while differing on some points, all agree on the essential interaction of child with environment as he or she actively takes a leading role in his or her own learning.

In line with the views of Piaget are those of Kelly (1963) whose theory of personality was brought to the attention of teachers by Britton (1970). Kelly's theory of personal constructs considers human behaviour in terms of a scientist continually hypothesising, testing and reforming hypotheses in light of what happens in his or her life experiences. Thus he emphasises the anticipatory and predictive nature of man. "Anticipation is both the push and the pull of the psychology of personal constructs" (Kelly, 1963, p.49).

More recently Feuerstein and Jensen (1980) and Wells (1981) have stressed the interactive nature of learning. While recognizing the importance of the concept of the child actively constructing his or her own environment, Feuerstein and Jensen propose that also of vital importance to cognitive development is a mediator who "interposes himself between the organism and the stimulus impinging upon it and mediates, transforms, reorders, organizes, groups and frames the stimuli in the direction of some specifically intended goal or purpose" (Feuerstein and Jensen, 1980, p.409). Thus, for example, a parent may consciously focus a child's attention on certain aspects of a picture in a book and may relate it to events from the child's own life. The parent therefore helps the child to transcend the present situation and to relate his or her knowledge to other contexts. This process is seen to be vital for cognitive development and points to the key role played by adults or other children in helping the child to interpret his or her environment. Other researchers, Ninio and Bruner (1978), Snow (1983), and Teale (1983) who observed parents' verbal interactions with children in shared story reading, have stressed the dialogic nature of these interactions, while Hayden (1985), in her examination of the nature of interaction in shared book reading, found that children were "mediated to the print during joint-reading episodes" (p.178). The links between the learning of oral and written language are thus gradually being further delineated.

Language Learning, Reading and Writing

Like many others in the teaching profession and in society generally, my concerns in the past have been largely with reading development. This obsession with reading (Emig, 1983) can be attributed in large part to the traditional view of reading, writing and oral language as discrete skills to be taught or acquired individually and with few connections made between them. Current theories of language acquisition maintain that all children are born with an inherent cognitive capacity for learning the structure of language, a processing ability rather than a body of knowledge per se (Lindfors, 1980). Children thus formulate their own rules for both understanding and using the language around them, approximating and then gradually coming closer to adult form and use (Loban, 1963; Menyuk, 1963). Language acquisition theories further stress the necessity of an interactive environment in which children can build their knowledge of language.

In the past 10 or 15 years there has been a gradual movement towards the view of the learning of written language (both reading and writing) as an integral part of this same theory of language acquisition.

> Children's control of the structure of their language, largely mastered by the time they come to first grade, is basic to all their learning. Their understanding of what they hear and what they read, and their ability to express what they know in speech and in writing, depend on their knowledge of the relationships between the sounds and the meanings of their language.
> (Lindfors, 1980, p.8)

Many other researchers (Britton, 1982; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Goodman and Goodman, 1978; Goodman, 1986; Holdaway, 1979; Smith, 1973; Teale, 1982; Temple, Nathan and Burris, 1982) similarly view the development of literacy as another strand of language development. Inasmuch as both oral and written language are driven by a need to communicate and a need to make sense of the environment, they have a great deal in common. There are differences also, but there is a growing consensus that the underlying processes are similar, and that each form of language use supports and extends the others.

Holdaway (1979) maintains that "literacy skills develop in the same 'natural' way as spoken language when the conditions for learning are comparable" (p. 20). By natural he means not that literacy learning just happens, but that in the optimal social environment it will be acquired with the same facility as oral language. The social environment has, in recent years, been the focus of much research (Brailsford, 1985; Cochran-Smith,1984; Doake, 1981; Heath, 1982; Juliebo, 1985; Suransky, 1982; Taylor, 1983; Wells, 1981), which emphasises that the learning of literacy is a process of cultural transmission and that any research in literacy must take the cultural context into consideration. A more detailed review of the literature pertinent to the relationship of home environment to literacy development will be pursued in Chapter IV.

In brief then, my view of reading development is that it is, like the learning of oral language, a meaning based activity which begins long before a child is formally taught in school. Like much of the learning that a child does, it is most easily learned when a child is actively involved in the process when he or she is, as Taylor (1983) states, learning "to organize (his/her) environment through the use of print" (P.54). It is "essentially a cultural phenomenon" (Malicky, 1985, p.137), and involves the use of processes which are common to other forms of language use.

Just as reading has come to be seen as an integral aspect of language development, so too writing has been given similar recognition in recent years. Following the lead of researchers such as Emig (1971), one of the first to examine the composing processes of twelfth grade students, and Graves (1975), who with his team of colleagues studied the writing processes of elementary age children, there has been a great flourish of interest in writing research during this time. Indeed Graves (1984), states that of the research on writing done in the last 25 years over half was done in the last 7 years. This interest has gone part way towards rectifying the imbalance that existed in the time and funds devoted to the study and teaching of reading over writing (Graves, 1984). Results of naturalistic observations in classrooms have stressed once again the active role taken by young writers in learning what it means to be a writer (Calkins,

1983, 1986; Graves, 1975; Hansen, Newkirk and Graves, 1985; Temple et al, 1982).

Marie Clay (1975) was the first to recognize a number of general principles relating to early writing, and showed also that children acquire considerable knowledge about written language before they are able to write. Clay stressed the notion of gross approximation in writing, with children gradually coming closer to the adult model. She also suggested that errors in children's writing indicate that they are working at their cutting edge and venturing into new facets of written expression. More recently it has been shown that as early as 3 or 4 years before school age, children explore written language, experimenting with and testing their concepts about print in meaningful and purposeful ways (Dyson, 1982; Harste et al, 1984). Other researchers in the area of spelling (Beers and Henderson, 1977; Chomsky, 1970; Read, 1975; Zutell, 1978, 1979) suggest that development in the conventions of writing is not an idiosyncratic process but that many children, particularly those who are allowed to attempt their own spelling strategies, will make very similar discoveries about spelling, in a predictable pattern.

Smith (1983) declares that "It could only be through reading that writers learn all the intangibles they know" (P. 558). Recently, some researchers (Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1984; Hansen et al, 1985) have begun to recognize a need for studies that explore the relationships between the two areas

of reading and writing rather than focussing on one to the exclusion of the other. Squire (1983), and Tierney and Pearson (1983), have taken tentative steps by examining more closely the similarities in the cognitive processes used in reading and writing. These recent calls for making explicit the connections between reading and writing, as well as my own interest in and wish to focus on the twin strands of literacy, influenced my decision to do research which focusses on both.

Literacy

Since I will be making repeated references to "literacy" it is appropriate to give a brief explanation of my understanding of the word. This is no easy matter since there is danger of over-simplification in attempting such definitions. The more information we gather about literacy, from a variety of perspectives and disciplines, the more complex a phenomenon it is seen to be. A multi-disciplinary gathering at the University of Victoria a few years ago was unable to reach a consensus on a definition of literacy (Goelman, Oberg & Smith, 1984). One of the most compelling descriptions of literacy I have seen is the following:

> All humanity is made up of two classes of people: the insiders and the outsiders. The insiders of the world have the power to learn their way about and to gain access to the meaning and significance of ideas and events. The outsiders are eternally strangers to such meaning...! The key to getting inside is literacy, the ability to read and write and, with it, to listen and speak.
>
> (Delattre, 1983, p. 52)

Delattre goes on to suggest that learning to read and write is a necessary goal of education, but not a sufficient one. "Access to the inside, to the intelligibility of the world... requires critical, intelligent literacy." This notion of a "critical attitude" (Freire 1973, p. 43) is at the heart of Freire's work with adult illiterates in Brazil (Freire, 1970, 1973) and seems central to any definition of literacy which goes beyond the notion of the mere acquisition of reading and writing "skills". While literacy may, as the 1962 U.N. statement declares, be relative to changing contexts and circumstances (Bailey and Fosheim, 1983), there is little doubt that, within our society, becoming an insider entails acquiring a critical literacy. Thus, my vision is one in which literacy permeates the life of those who are continually becoming literate. Reading and writing are not simply learned skills but are critical tools for understanding, relating to and acting in the world.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

One of the strengths of a home study is the ready availability of a vast amount of background information. The possibility and desirability of providing a thorough description of the context of a child's life has rarely even been considered in experimental educational research. Even in naturalistic studies, while considered worthwhile, it has not always been possible to adequately describe the life experiences that have influenced the development of an individual up to the beginning point of the research. However, in this study it was possible to provide such a context for the more active research stage of the study. Thus, the first phase entailed a description of Claire's development in reading and writing in her pre-school years and in her first 2 years at school. This description provided a context for the second stage, that of data collection which focussed both on the process and product of reading and writing activities, and upon the meaning that these activities bring to Claire's life. The second phase covered a period of approximately one year from May 1985 to May 1986, from shortly after Claire's 7th birthday until soon after her 8th birthday.

Ethical Considerations

Potential For Harm

In considering the possibilty of doing research within one's own family, careful attention must be given to the ethical aspects of the situation. Firstly, I felt that there must be reasonable assurance that the study would not be detrimental to those involved, particularly to the child who would be the main focus of the research. While it is impossible to be totally sure about such things I felt reasonably confident on two counts. In the first instance this would be an observational rather than an experimental study. I would continue to interact with my daughter and other family members in the usual way but in addition would describe the literacy-related events that I saw occurring. In fact, I saw considerable potential for results which would be mutually enhancing through the building of a greater awareness of my children's literacy. In the second instance, being aware of the possibility of my research having a deleterious effect on the parent/child relationship, I was sensitive to and would monitor for any negative effects. If in my own estimation, or that of my husband or advisor, detrimental effects were occurring, then I was quite prepared to discontinue the study.

Informed Consent

In view of the fact that it was not possible to maintain anonymity, I felt that it was especially important to obtain informed consent from the subject of my study. I considered that I had a sufficiently close relationship with my child and was sensitive enough to her personality and needs that I would perceive any unwillingness on her part, or any pressure she might feel to participate when she did not really wish to do so. Thus, while recognising the difference in perspective and understanding that a 7 year old might bring to participating in a study such as this, I gradually introduced the topic to her over a period of several days.

I discussed with Claire in a general way, the possibility of observing her reading and writing activities and of writing up what I had observed in book form. Her interest in my books, such as Lessons From A Child, and The Craft Of Children's Writing gave her some awareness of what such a project might encompass. On several occasions, she had read the samples of children's writing in these books and she realized that my own book would include similar examples. Claire did not agree immediately to the idea, but mulled it over for a while before deciding it would be alright, especially if the rest of the family was to be part of it too. Having once agreed to the idea, she seemed to accept it as just another part of my work and rarely referred to the topic again while I was actually collecting the data. The

other members of my family also agreed to the invasion of their privacy that this research project would entail.

As I began to write up the data Claire began to show a growing interest in what I was doing. She said she liked the way I wrote up our conversations and she also enjoyed reading over some of the extracts. As she came across work that she had done a couple of years ago she took great delight in reading it again. She referred to the book I was writing in positive terms, so that even the lengthy process of writing, which took much of my time from her, was made easier for her by virtue of the fact that she was part of it too.

Home And School

A final consideration was the potential that existed for the study to engender negative attitudes towards the school, a home versus school mentality, which again might have a detrimental effect on the child. A reflectively critical attitude towards my children's education was certainly already present, as with many parents. In fact it was my interest in questioning and attempting to understand the pedagogical basis for school practices that initially drew me to graduate work. It was, I felt, a healthy attitude but one which I would monitor and control for extreme reactions. Although the impact that the study had on my attitudes towards schools will be discussed in the reflections section of Chapter VI, it is worth noting at this point that in some very important ways carrying out this research allowed me to

become more tolerant of some educational practices and also more committed to acting for change in some areas.

Researcher Role

A major part of the data was collected through the mode of participant observation. While the degree of full participation varied from situation to situation, my dual role as parent and researcher ensured that I was often in the role of participant-as-observer (Gold, 1969). My role as parent was already well established and, in some respects, made my role as researcher easier to adopt. I did not have to cope with the usual problems of entry into the field and the gradual establishment of rapport (Freilich, 1970; Glazer, 1972; Wax, 1971), for it was Claire's willingness to share many of her experiences with me, along with my growing awareness of her own insights into her development as a reader and a writer, that had encouraged me to consider the idea of a home study. Even before I began to collect data systematically, we had good rapport and regular sharing sessions.

There are, of course conflicting opinions as to the adviseability of using as informant a person with whom one is already intimately connected. From an anthropological perspective it has been suggested that you cannot make your friend your informant (Spradley, 1980, p.27). Glaser and Strauss (1967) also point to the danger of bias, both in one's perspective and in the interpretation of data. But

others have suggested that a close relationship is a necessity for research of this kind. Bruyn, (1966) states that "...the greater degree of intimacy the observer achieves with his subjects, the more accurate his interpretations" (p. 183).

I was also aware as indicated in Chapter II, of a growing body of educational research in which home studies played an important role (Baghban, 1984; Bissex, 1980; Lass, 1982, 1983; Halliday, 1975, Harste et al, 1984). Undoubtedly, the potential for researcher bias was greater in this type of study than in many others, but my heightened awareness of the inherent dangers as well as continual self-monitoring and introspection were the best tools that I had for overcoming these potential pitfalls. I attempted, both in the collection of data and in the writing of this paper, to record my subjective impressions and assumptions, and to acknowledge them both to myself and to the reader.

Data Collection

Focus

An immediate problem I faced in the collection of data was that of focus. I quickly learned that there were so many things to see and listen to, that I had to make decisions about what I would include and exclude. As the mass of information grew, my focus narrowed to look primarily at those contexts that included references to reading or writing. A comment from my advisor about the far greater

number of print-related interactions that I had with my daughter compared with the number she had with her father caused me to draw back again and examine the overall picture. I soon saw that I was overlooking relevant data in such areas as games playing, and this caused me to broaden my focus again.

Thus, the research process became a continuous cycle of taking sweeping searches of the landscape and then zooming in for a closer look at particular points of interest. This same pattern of focus and re-focus was repeated in the analysis of the data by way of a continual back and forth movement between the general and the particular. Geertz (1974) describes this aptly as:

> "The characteristic intellectual movement, the inward conceptual rhythm -a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring them into simultaneous view" (p. 235).

This was a recursive movement that pervaded not only the research process but also the various stages of analyses and even the on-going rhythm of my life. It is perhaps a truism to state that when involved in naturalistic research, one does become caught up in the movement of the research itself and that one is irrevocably changed by it. Several researchers, (Freilich, 1970; Smith, 1979; Wax, 1971), have commented on the need to report these changes in the write-up of the study; and indeed introspective thought of this nature did play a significant part in the analysis and writing of this thesis.

Techniques

This study called for the use of several of the "multi-instrument" techniques of ethnography as described by Pelto (1970).. The process of using a number of different means to collect data and of using concepts generated from data already collected in order to provide focus for further data collection and thus gradual refinement of concepts and global themes, is referred to by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as "grounded theory".

Life history. As previously mentioned, the compilation of a life-history was seen to be an important step in providing a context for later descriptions. As well as describing the child herself, her family background, and her early experiences with written language, there was also some analysis of product, mainly written work, ranging from early scribbles to stories and journal writing. A listing was made of many of the books read to or by Claire during this early period, though it proved difficult to make any retrospective links between her reading and writing during these years.

Observation. All observations were carried out in our home or during family activities outside the home. At no time did I set up any experimental or testing situations but made my observations in as natural a way as possible. I carried a note-book with me at all times and briefly noted items of interest as they occurred. Claire occasionally made comments about my notebook writing but generally seemed to

view it in the same light as she saw my other writing. If I was not immediately involved in the situation, as happened for instance when I observed interactions between Claire and her father or sisters, I would make a more detailed record right then. Otherwise, more extensive descriptions were written up as soon as possible and generally no later than the same evening. In a separate column, I also made some preliminary reflections about what I had seen and heard. In this way, patterns and concepts gradually began to emerge and provided focus for future observations.

As the data began to grow in volume, I made the decision to type all information into a word processing program for ease of handling. For the last six months of the study, when the greatest amount of data was collected, all new descriptions were immediately transcribed in this manner. I continued to write my reflections and preliminary interpretations by hand, in a column alongside the typewritten data.

Informal interviewing. Key-Informant interviewing (Pelto, 1970) was also used quite extensively in the collection of data. Since my case study consisted of only one child I had ample opportunity to talk to her informally during the entire course of the study. One of the great advantages of a study involving one's own child is the fact of being right there and available for impromptu discussion- at the convenience of the child rather than the researcher. Though I was initially quite hesitant about being too

intrusive with my questions and comments, it soon became clear to me that Claire participated only for as long as she wanted to, and she felt no compunction in telling me when she'd had enough of such talk. Generally, I felt that she had more control over the situation than most children involved in research projects. Without the least hesitation, she was able to change the subject, leave the room, or simply tell me she'd had enough questions and now "I want to read my book" (Transcript: Mar. 3, 1986).

Audio-tape recordings. For approximately 6 months of the study (November to April) I had an unobtrusive microcassette recorder running at various times of the day, though not always at the same time every day; for example, arrival home from school, suppertime, after supper activities, and story-time. Both Claire and her sisters were fascinated by the very small size of the recorder, and played with it for about a week before tiring of it. They all agreed to my using it around the house, and it soon became as commonplace as ~~my notebook~~. After one particularly raucous mealtime exchange Rachel said "Oh no, is that thing on!" (Transcript: Jan. 21, 1986), at which point the three girls began to ham it up for the recorder. Most of the time though it was simply part of the furnishings and there were few questions as to whether it was recording or not. The majority of these taperecordings (about 60 hours in time) were transcribed verbatim on the word processor. As the amount of data became very large I made the decision to continue to transcribe only

those portions which seemed particularly relevant i.e. the segments relating to reading and writing activities. This was done from mid-February until mid-April. All tapes were listened to several times during the process of analyzing and writing up the data so that the portions of tapes that were not transcribed remained open to on-going scrutiny.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was an on-going process, which began almost as soon as data collection began, and continued through the writing and interpretation of the descriptions. I depended largely on continual reading and re-reading of my notes in order to search for emerging themes. Initially minor patterns emerged which provided focus for continuing observations. A continuous cycle, similar to that described by Spradley (1980), was established involving: seeking answers to questions I asked about situations (e.g. What does writing mean to Claire?), collecting data, analysing the data, asking new questions, collecting further data and so on. At first I used a system of colour coding with hi-lighter pens to make the themes more readily distinguishable in the mass of data. As minor themes were subsumed within larger themes, however, this method seemed to be less useful than at the beginning, and I began instead to make notations in the margins of my notes.

After deciding in mid-April to draw this stage of the study to a close (although it was impossible not to continue

to record the occasional interesting anecdote), I read through the entire data twice, over a 2 or 3 day period, making new notes as I read. It was during this process that major themes emerged clearly and I was ready to begin describing my observations. Notes and transcriptions were also continually re-read during the 5 month writing process.

Trustworthiness Of The Research

Guba (1981), states that in judging the trustworthiness of naturalistic research, the standard criteria applied to research in the rationalistic paradigm (i.e. internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity) cannot be applied. Rather, he suggests that four analogous criteria be used as guidelines for establishing trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

This criterion is comparable to internal validity in the rationalistic paradigm. In order to establish credibility of interpretation, Guba suggests that some of the following methods might be followed: prolonged engagement at the site, persistent observation, peer debriefing, triangulation, collection of referential adequacy materials, member checks.

Each of these procedures were carried out to a greater or lesser extent. Persistent observations were made in the home context over a one year period. During this time many discussions, both with fellow students and with my faculty

advisor, served to question and further my own thinking and allowed for the debriefing function to occur. Several different methods of data collection were used ensuring triangulation, while in terms of referential adequacy materials, I collected numerous samples of reading and writing materials and many hours of audio-tapes. Member checks, while difficult to carry out with the child who was the main focus of the study because of her young age, were nonetheless achieved through my husband who read many of the notes and transcripts and also the descriptions and interpretations as they were being written. This process of member checks, which is "the single most important action which the inquirer can take" (Guba, 1981, p.19), was invaluable both in affirming the "truth" of the situations and in acting as a check on researcher bias.

Transferability

In writing of transferability which he compares to external validity, Guba says that it is not possible to develop "truth" statements that can be applied to all contexts but that one can aim for "working hypotheses" relevant to particular contexts (p. 4). Guba recommends that in order to "maximize the range of information which is uncovered" (p.20), theoretical/purposive sampling should be carried out and "thick" descriptive data should be collected. Through the process of focus and re-focus described earlier, I consider that such sampling was achieved. Also an attempt was particularly made in this study to provide a description

of the life context of the child as well as of the ongoing research context, in order that "fittingness with other contexts" (Guba, 1981, p.21) might be determined by the reader.

Dependability

Guba recommends three steps to be followed to parallel the replicability requirement of rationalistic research. He suggests: overlap of methods; stepwise replication, using two separate research teams; and use of an external auditor to examine the research procedures. While the stepwise replication procedure was virtually impossible in this study, both overlap of methods and external audit were carried out, the latter by my faculty advisor.

Confirmability

The concept of objectivity in the rationalistic paradigm is seen in terms of data and interpretational confirmability in naturalistic research. Guba identifies two steps to be followed in this respect: triangulation, or collecting data through a variety of methods, and practicing reflexivity. As described previously, triangulation was carried out in this study. Also, introspective thought and comments were included continually in fieldnotes and discussed with peers. A reflections section in the final chapter reveals the nature of this reflexivity and the changes in orientation that occurred because of it.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE CONTEXT

Literacy In The Family

> The evolution of literacy transmission is highly dependent on the childhood experiences of the parents and evolves through the interplay of their individual biographies and educative styles.
> (Taylor, 1983, p. 12)

In order to describe adequately the early experiences that Claire had with print, it is necessary to set her literacy development within the context of the literacy of the family generally. This chapter will first look briefly at my literacy-related childhood experiences and those of my husband, and at the literacy environment that has evolved within our family. Claire's early experiences with print will then be explored in more detail, in an attempt to trace her growth in literacy up to the point when the study began.

Early Literacy Experiences Of Parents

In discussing at various points in the study our memories of our own growth in literacy, Esmond and I saw that there were some similarities in our literacy growth within our family lives, but many differences also.

We were both born and brought up in England, Es in a London suburb, and I further north in an industrial town in Lincolnshire. While I was from a large family, the eldest of 8 children, Es had only one brother, who was 7 years younger. Both families, although quite different in cultural

and ethnic backgrounds, provided warm, supportive environments where a sense of family history was passed on through stories and yarns. In each family too, formal schooling was valued and respected. The identical set of encyclopedias held the place of honour on the small bookshelves in our respective living rooms! Arthur Mee's Children's Encyclopedia was perhaps symbolic of our parents' desire for their children to progress by means of formal education and pointed also to their sense of the importance of books for learning. Es and I went through the primary level state schooling system at which time he passed the 11 plus exam and went to a local grammar school. I also passed this exam, which served to segregrate the "academic" and "non-academically inclined" children, but I was accepted as a non-fee paying student at a private Catholic girls' school which had a wide ability range. During secondary school years, Esmond's interests inclined him towards the sciences, and he went on to do both undergraduate and postgraduate work in zoology. My own interests lay in the arts, particularly literature, and this was my area of specialization when I enrolled in a college of education.

As a young child, Es is said to have been an avid writer. Family stories tell of the hours he would spend at the kitchen table filling single sheets and exercise books with scribble writing. In the area of reading, he was well provided with comics, and his mother read these to him before he could read himself. Traditional British comics are filled

with all types and kinds of personalities. They range from anthropomorphic animal characters or talking toys for young children, to slapstick and stereotyped characters, to fantasy personalities, to supposedly average schoolboy and schoolgirl types, to heros and heroines of science fiction. The stories are often serialised and follow a predictable story pattern, as do many adult romance or thriller novels. Certainly, they are an inherent aspect of many British childhoods and have been for at least the past fifty years. While their worth has often been questioned by educators, they represent countless hours of exposure to, and enjoyment of, print materials for young children.

In addition to his comics, Es owned quite a number of books, mostly popular children's series such as Billy Bunter and Just William, although he rarely visited the library as a child. During his teens, he remembers hating the painful dissection of classical novels such as Tom Brown's Schooldays and The Thirty Nine Steps at school, and when he did begin to visit the library as a 15 year old, he took out only science books for leisure reading. At the age of 17 he read The Catcher In The Rye, which had a profound effect on him, and for the first time he chose to re-read a book. But it was only when he became a university student that he began to feel the inadequacy of his own literary background and started to read more widely. His reading tastes are now more diverse than my own and include fiction, history, historical fiction, biography and science.

My own childhood relationship with books was somewhat different. There was little money available for buying books in my home, though comics were also a weekly feature of my reading diet. Every Thursday my Dad would bring home our weekly treat, a selection of candy and several comics; 'Girl' and 'Schoolfriend' for my sister and me, 'Eagle' and 'Topper' for my brothers, and 'Beano' and 'Dandy' to share. By Friday we had read them all and were ready for our twice weekly visit to the travelling library. I spent many Tuesday and Friday evenings in the musty warmth of the big van that stopped at the top of our road, once reading the whole of What Katy Did Next as I waited for the rain to stop. I don't recall being read to very often as a young child, but as soon as I learned to read at the age of 5, I was rarely to be found without a book.

My parents were not readers of books, though they always read the daily newspaper as well as newspapers and magazines that were sent regularly from their native Ireland. As I grew older I too read the 'Enniscorthy Echo' which my Grandfather sent every week, and I became addicted to the outrageous ghost stories in the 'Ireland's Own' weekly. I also have vivid memories of a good deal of writing going on during my school years. Both of my parents wrote regularly to their parents and other relatives in Ireland and in the United States. The familiar pattern of receiving and sending letters, newspaper cuttings, and other items of interest was repeated in my generation as we in turn left home and moved

away. It is a habit so deeply ingrained that rarely a week goes by when I do not write at least one letter. Over the past year, I have reflected on the fact that these letters were, and are, a deeply meaningful and authentic dimension of my own literacy.

Later Years

This brief review of the development of our own literacy serves, perhaps, to give some indication of the kinds of experiences with print that we brought to our own family life. Since we married and came to Canada in 1969, reading and writing have continued to play an important role in our lives, both personally and professionally. Thus, a wide range of literacy events have been an integral part of our children's lives from the time they were infants.

Reading. Though our early reading experiences were somewhat different, Es and I both became avid readers. The reading of scientific books and journals is an important part of his work, while my professional reading has encompassed many areas of education over the years. Es always has a novel on hand for leisure reading, and reads systematically and regularly -often in the evenings, and at bed-time. My own leisure reading has been less systematic and regular. When the children were small and life was hectic, newspaper and magazine articles were often all that I could focus on. At other times I raced through a number of novels often reading more than one at a time, picking up whichever book

was close at hand when I had a few minutes to read. Sometimes I read poetry, mostly old favourites. I have gone through phases of reading all Canadian authors followed by "binges" on current British authors, while Es has worked his way through many of the works of Dickens, Austen and other classics he missed in his youth.

Having my own children to read to gave me good reason to further my long-standing interest in children's books. I began to buy books for Rachel even before she was born and we read to her regularly from about 6 months of age. We followed a similar story-reading pattern with both Catherine and Claire, and all 3 children responded positively to this early sharing of books, making it a mutually enjoyable activity. Since I spent more time with the children it is probable that I read to them more often, but Es too participated at bedtime and on weekends. He tended also to be involved in many play activities with them such as building with Lego or playing card or board games.

Both of the older girls learned to read easily, and they continue to enjoy reading. Rachel is a voracious reader who reads and re-reads some books many times, even in her mid-teens returning occasionally to some childhood favourites. Catherine takes a more leisurely approach to reading for enjoyment. Her first reading of a book is altogether more paced, almost measured and she returns to familiar books less often, although I have noticed a tendency for her to re-read more often in recent months. Undoubtedly their interest in

books has had an effect on Claire's literacy and this observation will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Writing. Writing too has always been a part of our lives. As a researcher, Es is continually involved in writing papers and he often writes at home. My own diverse voluntary interests have included writing for a variety of purposes, such as minutes of meetings, reports, newsletter articles, and letters to government representatives. Taking university courses while my children were pre-schoolers, I also had many assignments to write. We are both involved quite often too, in personal letter writing. Then there are the many little writing tasks that help to organize a household: bill payments, notes for the milkman, shopping lists, telephone messages, birthday cards, calendar notations of coming events, memos; notes to teachers. In the past couple of years particularly, writing has been one of the most frequent kinds of activities in our household.

Perhaps because of my family history of letter writing, this activity has been encouraged since the girls were quite small and could only write a picture. Christmas and birthday gifts from relatives overseas usually precipitated several days of this kind of letter writing. There were always plenty of pencils, crayons and paper around so that the opportunities for exploring the use of written language were readily available. I remember that each of the girls filled blank sheets with scribble writing, causing Es to reminisce

about his own experiences in this area. I also recall formally teaching each of my children to write their names, and sometimes wrote other words for them when requested to do so. In retrospect, however, I would say that writing with our children was not as regular and systematic as was reading with them. Writing was available as an activity, but reading was much more actively promoted.

Life History Of A Seven Year Old

The literacy environment, as Taylor (1983) points out, is not a static environment. The constant interchange between all members of the household, the reciprocal sharing of literacy events, ensures that literacy within our family, as within most families, is a growing, developing process. When Claire was born not only did we transmit our literacy to her, but her presence acted also upon our literacy and influenced it in numerous ways.

Claire was born on April 7 1978, a sister to Catherine who would turn five that summer, and Rachel aged seven and a half. Like her sisters, Claire had an infancy and early childhood that was relatively free of illness, and her physical growth and development were considered to be normal in every respect. Like many experienced mothers I was older, wiser and more relaxed with my third child, content to watch her develop and grow into a bright, well-adjusted child with a wry sense of humour.

With both of her sisters in school from the time she was five months old, large parts of Claire's days were spent mostly in my company. We did all of the usual kinds of baby and toddler activities such as walks in the park, playground sessions, gym and swim classes, bike rides and visits to the library. Also, Claire was usually toted along to most of the activities in which I was involved. From an early age she was used to being in her sisters' school where I helped, in a voluntary capacity with everything from hot dog sales to library displays to tutoring immigrant children. From the age of 6 months, Claire had friends her own age whose company she enjoyed, and we would have her friends over or would take her to their homes to play. Grocery shopping; visits to the shopping mall, the doctor, dentist and optometrist; sitting in on her sisters' music and gymnastics classes; watching her sisters participate in sports - these ordinary activities were all a part of daily life in her early years.

Early Literacy

Although Claire's early interactions with print were not recorded in any detailed or systematic way, it is perhaps helpful to give some general sense of the pathways Claire has taken towards becoming literate up to the point when this study began. Any information presented in this regard was recalled from my own memory with some help from my husband and older daughters.

Story-reading. The most prevalent literacy event in Claire's early years was undoubtedly story-reading. Because of my own enjoyment of children's books I read to Claire often, both at bedtime and during the daytime too. I can recall many occasions when, as a lively 2 year old, she would only be persuaded to have an afternoon nap if we both lay down together with several books. Her father also shared often in the bedtime story readings and on occasion Catherine and Rachel would read to her too, although their interest in her literacy became more pronounced as she grew older and began to read books herself.

My memories of these sessions are of a considerable amount of verbal interaction during story reading. Claire always asked many questions about the stories we read together and this still continues. She often insisted on pausing in a story, as we turned a page, in order to first look carefully at the picture. She liked to join in the reading, especially on some of her favourites such as The Tale Of Tom Kitten - "pit pat paddle pat! pit pat waddle pat!" This kind of activity occurred as early as age 12-18 months when she loved to chant along with nursery rhymes or to complete lines and phrases. She would repeat words that she liked the sounds of such as "gurgle, gurgle, glub, glub" and later would say the whole line. She interacted in a similar fashion with some T.V. programs such as Sesame Street, singing or chanting along with the alphabet and the words that were flashed on the screen.

Rachel also recalled several items of interest. She remembered how, as a toddler, Claire always liked to turn the pages when she was read to. When she was younger Claire was ready to turn the page after one sentence, thinking that the whole page had been read, but as she got older she waited for a verbal signal from the reader. Then, at some time during her fourth year she began to ask "Where are you?" and after being shown, she would point to the spot and attempt to follow along for a little while as the reading continued. Soon, she was able to point to particular words and say them correctly. By the time she was 5 years of age Claire enjoyed reading, on her own, a number of the easy readers that we had in the house.

Having 2 older sisters meant that Claire inherited a large personal library, one that was added to frequently at Christmas, birthdays and on impromptu visits to local bookstores. A recent re-organization of her bedroom precipitated a mass clear-out of many of her early picture books and easy readers. A few of the well-worn ones were discarded, perhaps 40 or so were sent to a school book sale, while a further 130 were boxed and stored. Not all of these were "quality" literature. There were many inexpensive Little Golden Books and similar department store standards, which were equally well-worn. Much as I loved to read the classic Beatrix Potter tales, Claire would just as often request the Whitman Tell-A-Tale book, Train Coming. Told in simple rhyming couplets, the story caught the rhythm of the

train as it travelled through the countryside past all of its usual sights and it was a favourite with each of my children. In addition to owning many children's books we have also always been regular users of the library. When the girls were younger it was not uncommon to read through 20 or more new story books in a week, and visits to the library occurred every 2 or 3 weeks.

Writing. Early writing activities are perhaps somewhat easier to recall, since I saved some of the written products. Consistent with Baghban's (1984) observations of her daughter, Giti, I remember that Claire enjoyed using paper and pencil during the latter half of her second year. As I wrote letters, for instance, she would sometimes sit beside me and make her own "scribbles". When I was involved in tutoring at a local school during Claire's third year, I would supply her with books to look at and paper and crayons with which to draw, and she generally occupied herself with these quite easily for a half hour session. One of the earliest pictures I saved contains a clear example of both writing and drawing, and was done at the age of 3 years 10 months (Figure 1). Clearly recognizable are the letters, 'o', 'e', and 'p'. The writing incorporated in the picture in this instance is representative of much of the writing Claire did at this age.

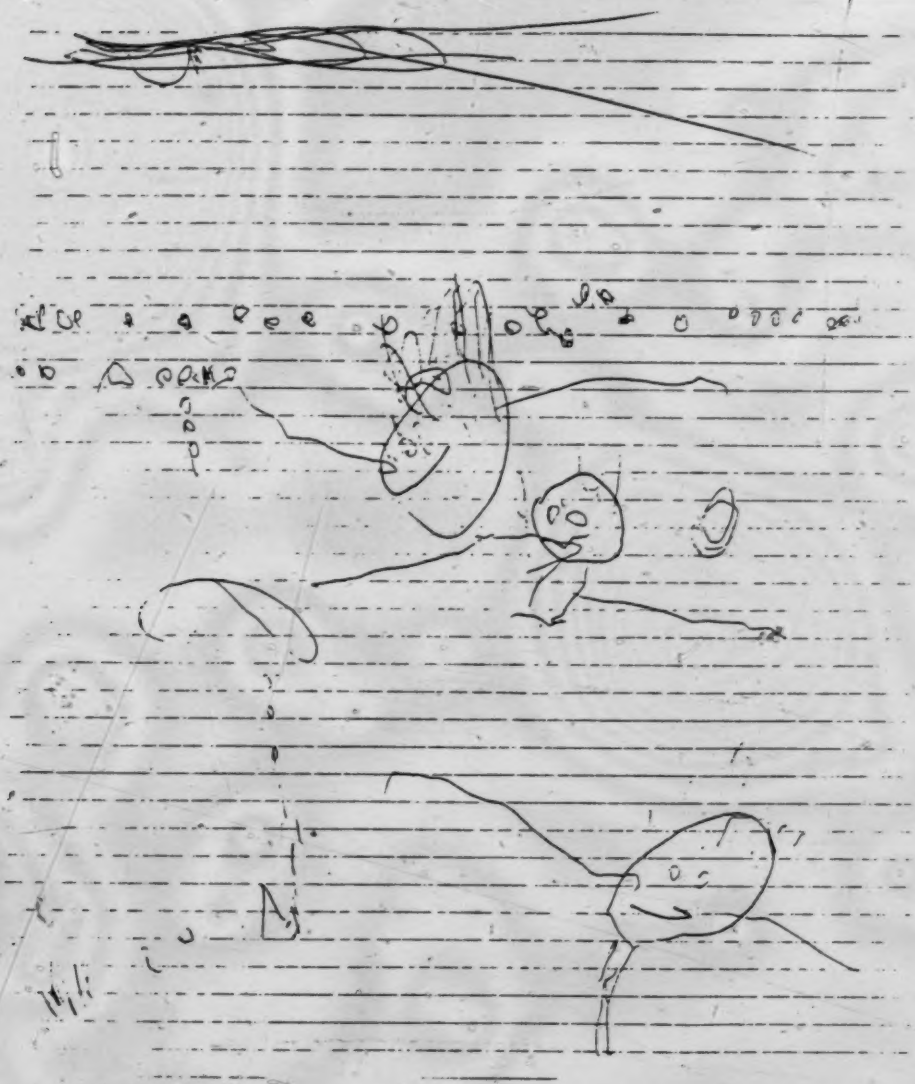


Figure 1: Writing and Drawing

There is also a picture of a caterpillar which she drew at age 3 years 7 months. She wrote her name several times on the reverse side and then carefully cut it out (Figure 2).

Figure 2: A caterpillar: Claire wrote her name on the back.

Thus, like the 3 year olds in the Harste et al study (1984), it appears that long before she reached the age of formal schooling, Claire was already a "sophisticated written language decision maker" (p. 401).

Other activities. As well as being exposed to a wide range of children's literature as a young child, Claire also had access to a variety of art and writing materials. Paints and brushes, home-made playdough, paper of assorted sizes and types, crayons, pencils and felt pens were generally in plentiful supply. Magnetic letters were a permanent fixture on the fridge and, as a 3 and 4 year old, Claire enjoyed playing "What does this say?" games as she arranged and re-arranged the letters. She also had many puzzles, games and toys, and has always been especially keen on jigsaw puzzles and on playing games of all kinds. We tend to play board games and card games as a family so it is not surprising that Claire liked to participate in such games from an early age. She went through phases of playing one game for weeks or even months on end, and any available member of the family would be co-opted into playing UNO, Guess Who, or whatever was the current favourite. Her father was usually especially co-operative in this regard. Even when the games were too difficult for her to participate in alone, she would play with someone else and join in however she could.

From the age of 3 years, Claire attended a co-operative nursery school for 2, and later 3, mornings a week. As a parent helper I had many opportunities to be involved in the program which was well run and provided many opportunities for a variety of free play activities as well as a few more structured activities such as games, story and song. In her

last few months of nursery school Claire engaged in some "reading readiness" activities such as naming letters, rhyming games and copying sentences to describe her pictures. For the most part these activities were optional and carried out in a casual way. There was no coercion for individuals to participate, though many children did.

First School Experience

Claire's first experience with formal education was, in many ways, not only a new beginning for her but a time of growth for me in terms of my current thinking about education. It was this experience that precipitated my reflections, first about the surface features of educational methods, and later about the underlying principles and philosophy of those methods. Because it provides a basis for my present theoretical understanding, and because it shows the early formal influences bearing upon Claire's literacy development, it is pertinent to describe, in some detail, the nature of that first school experience.

In the summer of the year that Claire turned 5 years old, our family returned to England for a year. My husband was to spend a study leave working in a laboratory in a London college, commuting from the small Thameside town in Oxfordshire where we lived. Whereas Claire would normally have been starting kindergarten at this age, she was instead enrolled at the beginning level of an English primary school as a full-time student. She was now making tentative steps

in reading, and she anticipated this transition to school life with pleasure and excitement.

I, too, shared her anticipation. Seven years previously, we had spent a year in the same town and Rachel had enjoyed her first year of formal education in this small, neighbourhood elementary school, which was organised on the lines of 'family' or vertical grouping. I was surprised, but pleasantly so, to find that the school had changed little, either physically or philosophically.

The general atmosphere of the school was informal, open and welcoming. Claire settled down very quickly and soon made new friends in her group which had an age range of 4 years 9 months to 7 years plus. A strong emphasis on individualized programs meant that the school had grown to rely quite heavily on volunteer parent help. Parents with a wide range of educational backgrounds chose to help out in areas where they felt most comfortable and useful, and they often brought younger children along. As a parent volunteer I spent 3 half days per week, both supervising small groups in cooking, and listening to children read individually.

Because of the wide age range in each class, the language arts and mathematics programs were almost totally individualized, with all children working at their own levels and progressing at their own rates. Children were expected to cover a certain amount of work each day, but it was generally left up to individuals to decide on their own sequence. In their first year of school, children required

more guidance from the teacher to plan their day but with the example of older children to follow, they quickly seemed to fall into a pattern acceptable both to themselves and the teacher. Claire was immediately inspired by the example and abilities of the older students and had no hesitation in believing that she too could read and write as they did.

Reading. All children were informally assessed upon their entrance to school and were placed at their own levels in the reading program. Books were colour coded for levels of difficulty and there was a wide range from which to choose. Children were allowed a fairly free choice of books within their level and were encouraged to take them home. Also they read orally to the teacher, aide, or a parent helper several times a week. Claire began immediately on simple eight page books, reading them at the rate of three or four per week initially and one or two each week as they increased in length. She brought home a book on her first day at school and read it several times that evening. Claire seemed to enjoy this re-reading, each time gaining in fluency and control of the text. The next day she brought home a new book to read. This became the pattern for the year, with the books increasing in difficulty and length.

Claire enjoyed reading her books to others in the family and often verbally stated the sense of satisfaction she felt in her own progress. She read orally to me often at this time, both at home and at school. I remember noticing how, when she turned a page, she still liked to examine the

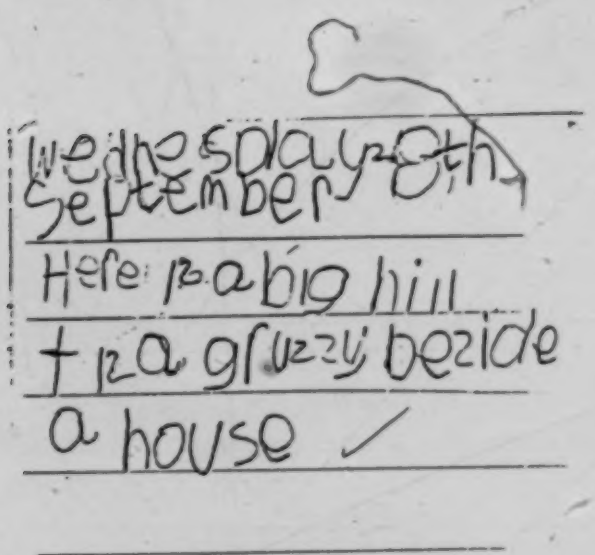
pictures before continuing to read. She often glanced at the picture if she was having difficulties with particular words also. She was rarely discouraged by not knowing a word but tried a number of different strategies to figure it out. As well as using picture clues, she would re-read, read ahead, sound it out, or sometimes just skip over it altogether if it didn't make too much difference to the sense of the story. In particular, she often miscued on small function words like 'and', 'for', 'to'. Like the other children in her group, she loved advancing to a new book and enjoyed browsing through the shelves before making her selection. Her choices seemed to be influenced sometimes by a desire to continue with the next book in the series, and at other times by recommendations from her friends. Occasionally her teacher suggested a new title too.

It was common practice for teachers and helpers to discuss books with the children when they read at school, and occasionally they discussed their books with others who might be reading the same story. This served to provide a check on comprehension for the teacher and also to allow the children to extend and deepen their understanding. At the same time Claire continued to hear more complex stories read to her, and these too were the basis of discussion. With little formal instruction and lots of practice she learned to read easily that year. During her 9 months at the school she read 83 books as part of the program; some were trade books and others were from reading series; the majority were

self-chosen. Claire believed that she could read, others believed that she could read, and few obstacles seemed to get in the way of her reading.

Writing. From the very first days of school, writing too was an integral part of the school day. Children were allowed a free choice in their topics and results ranged from pictures with a few dictated words at the beginning levels to lengthy and complex stories from the 7 year olds. For most, including Claire, their writing took the form of a diary or journal. Stories were also sometimes written out and displayed on the bulletin boards. Generally the emphasis was on the content of the writing rather than on the mechanics of spelling, punctuation and handwriting, although work for display was subject to correction and neat copying. Sometimes children read their stories to the class and these were always enjoyed by the other children.

Initially, in writing, the teacher wrote a sentence in response to Claire's description of her picture, and Claire then copied it. After a couple of weeks of writing in this form, Claire opted to write her own sentences and continued to do so for the rest of the year. With very little formal instruction in the mechanics of writing, her printing itself became noticeably neater and more controlled as the weeks passed, as shown in Figure 3.



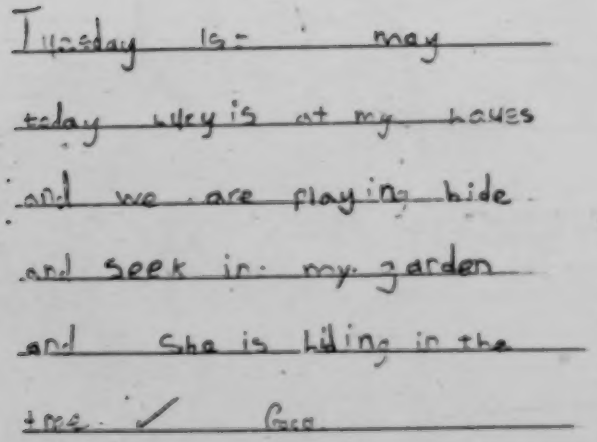


Figure 3: Printing Gradually Becomes Neater

Progress in spelling appeared to be hindered by Claire's dependence on the teacher's help - a dependence that was not particularly discouraged. However a growing confidence in her writing ability was reflected to a small extent in her own phonetic spelling in work produced later in the year (Figure 4).

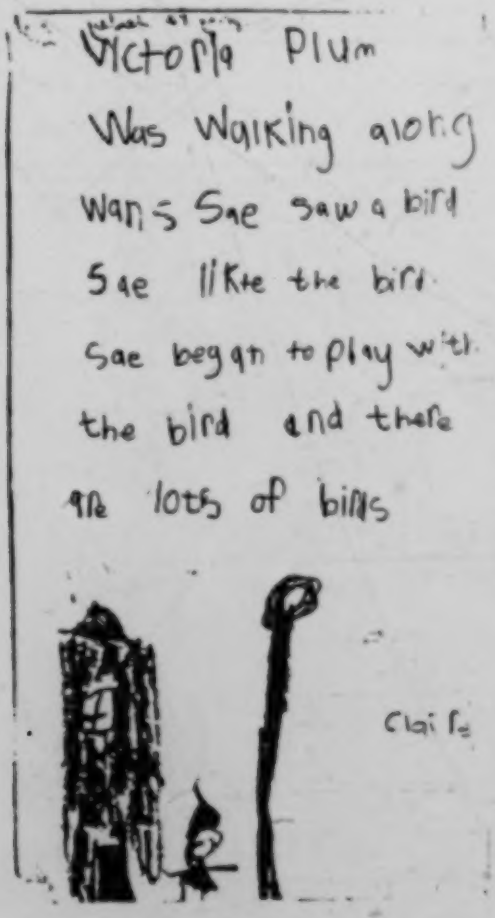


Figure 4: Occasional invented spelling attempts.

A further interesting growth was to be observed in the use of pictures with writing. Initially, the pictures were the most important part of the creative activity and carried the main part of the message. Graves (1983) describes drawing as a "rehearsal" for the writing process maintaining that as children develop in their ability to write, the "rehearsal" becomes internalized so that drawing is no longer as necessary. Calkins (1986) says further that "the act of drawing and the picture itself both provide a supportive scaffolding within which the piece of writing can be constructed." (p. 50). Generally, during this year, Claire continued to support her writing through drawing but she appeared to rely less and less on this process. On one occasion she drew no picture, but decorated the page. Another time, she wrote some of her report first, enhanced it with a picture halfway, and then completed her writing. During the last couple of months of that year her writing did not always correspond exactly to the pictures. She was able to separate the two much more readily than she had at the beginning of the year and was now using the written mode to communicate more effectively than the artistic.

The subject matter of much of her early writing was remarkably similar throughout. I saw strong support here for Grave's (1975) findings that girls tend to write often about primary territory which is related to school and home. The recurring and generating principles first noted by Clay, (1975) were in evidence as Claire used one or two patterns-

mostly comments about her house, trees and flowers- which she practised by repeating over and over again, with minor variations (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Recurring and generating principles in Claire's early writing

Towards the end of her third month in school, Claire wrote her first real story to display on the bulletin board. She drew no illustrations but embellished her writing with a pattern in the margin and emphasized her words with a further design. By March, Claire wrote a fairly coherent story which went beyond the picture (Figure 6). This again was written on loose leaf paper. To the end of the year, she reserved her book for writing of a more personal nature, though many children used their journals for stories also.

Robin Hood is in the Forest
With Friar Tuck Robin Hood
has his bow and arrow
and he lives in the Forest
and he were to the fair for Sum
[illegible] at the fair there was Sum
Soldiers and all Robin Hoods People [illegible]

Figure 6: Story that tells more than the picture.

In examining this work, I found support for Britton's (1970) contention that children regard their early writing largely as written objects rather than as attempts at communication. Initially Claire's writing was simply a description of her pictures. Only towards the end of the year did a sense of personal voice come through and Claire's writing could be seen in terms of a desire to communicate as well as describe (Figure 7).

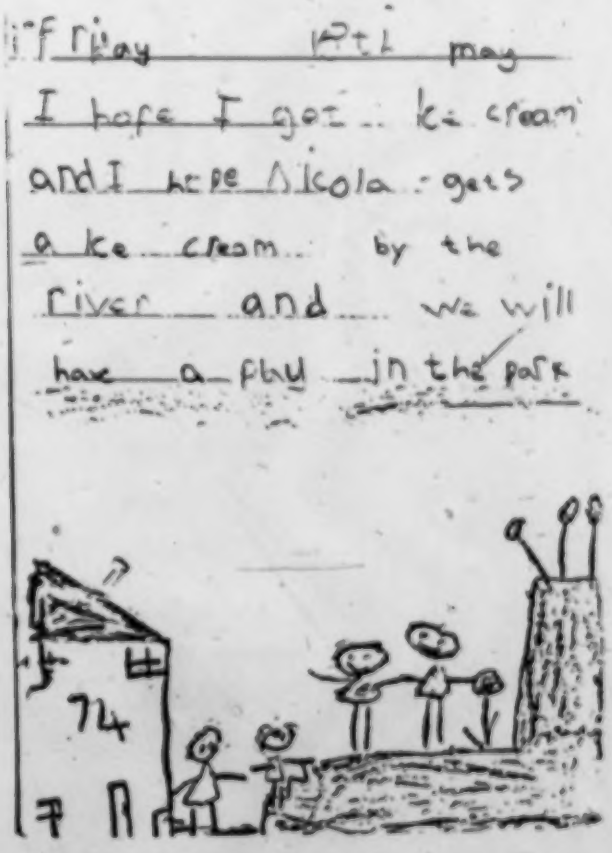


Figure 7: Writing to tell rather than describe.

It is, I am sure, quite evident that I was an enthusiastic and admiring participant in my daughter's first school experience. That is not to say, however, that I considered it to be a perfect program. Even at the time I wondered about the lack of variety in writing opportunities, since Claire seemed to write mostly in her journal and did not often attempt to write stories. Despite the lack of emphasis on correctness of spelling I also noticed that because children were encouraged to collect spellings in their own word books, there was continual self-interruption in the writing process as children asked for one spelling after another. Many children, including Claire were quite distracted by this up and down movement as they attempted to write. Nevertheless, this first year of school was a very positive experience for Claire and a year in which she made great strides along the pathways of literacy.

A Change Of Schools

On our return to Edmonton, Claire was enrolled at the elementary school that both of her sisters had attended. Her April birthday meant that she missed the cutoff date for grade 2 by 5 weeks, so she was initially placed in the grade 1 half of a 1/2 split. After a few weeks, in consultation with her teacher, it was decided that the grade 1 program had little to offer her, and she was transferred to the grade 2 half of the class.

Claire again adjusted well to the change in school environment and settled down quite quickly in her new school. Because I had now embarked on my graduate program and also because there was less parental involvement generally in her new classroom, I no longer had the same opportunities to observe Claire's literacy growth from this perspective. Nevertheless, based on my past experiences with the school, occasional visits to her classroom, discussions with her teacher, and work she brought home, I would describe the learning situation in her second year of school as being more traditionally structured. A basal reading series was used in the reading program and much of the written work centred on workbooks and worksheets. There was a fairly strong emphasis on neatness, and on correctness of spelling and punctuation.

Generally, Claire did considerably less free writing than she had the previous year. Her hesitancy about trying to spell words by herself appeared to be reinforced by her introduction to spelling tests and correction of errors in her work. She stated on many occasions throughout the year that she didn't like writing and this was reflected in the comments on her report cards. Claire did some journal writing for a short time in the year when the focus again was on conventions, but this form of writing seemed to peter out after about six entries. There was some story writing also, with the topics usually assigned. Towards the end of the year, all of the children had one of their stories made into a book, and Claire was very pleased with her own story.

Generally though, I was beginning to be somewhat concerned about her negative attitude towards writing. She often stated her dislike of it, and rarely chose to write at home.

Although her reading at school was less varied and less in quantity than in her first year at school, she continued to read regularly at home and began to enjoy longer chapter books. Her teacher emphasised good literature and read often to the children. Generally, Claire's progress in school continued to be very good. She liked her teacher, and enjoyed her friends and many of the school activities.

Discussion And Related Literature

Claire was, like the daughter of anthropologists Scollon and Scollon (1979), "literate before she learned to read" (p.6). As a member of a family with a high level of literacy, she learned, through observation and participation, many of the behaviours, values and purposes of reading and writing.

The brief biographies of my own early literacy experiences and those of my husband indicate a number of factors in our respective families which have been identified in the research as having a positive effect on literacy development. Although our parents were not highly educated themselves, they valued formal schooling and were very supportive of our own education (Clark, 1976; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Heath, 1983; Taylor, 1983). Each of our homes provided opportunities for a number of literacy activities which,

while not necessarily diverse, were usually occasions when reading and writing were enjoyed and used for real purposes (Brailsford, 1985; Clark, 1976; Doake, 1981; Goodman 1986; Juliebö, 1985). There was also a good deal of modelling of literate behaviour, and both reading and writing materials were available to us (Brailsford, 1985; Cochran-Smith, 1984; Clark, 1976; Doake, 1981; Juliebö, 1985). I have no clear memories of being read to at home, although nursery rhymes and songs were certainly a part of my early years. Such early experiences with oral language have been considered important for later success with written language (Heath, 1983; Holdaway,1979). Es does have memories of being read to as a young child and many researchers have identified parents reading to children as perhaps the most influential factor in the facility with which those children learn to read (Doake, 1981; Heath, 1983; Teale, 1982; Wells, 1981). The ownership of a number of books and/or the use of the library has also been described as an important factor in early literacy development (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Clark, 1976; Durkin, 1966; Hayden, 1985; Juliebö, 1985; Taylor, 1983).

Taylor (1983), observed that "In each family, some rituals and routines of written language usage appear to conserve family traditions of literacy, while others appear to change the patterns of the past." (p.7). This somewhat cursory glance at literacy within three generations of our family provides support for Taylor´s statement. As parents we have, perhaps unconsciously, retained aspects of literacy

from the previous generation that were the most meaningful and enjoyable for us. For me, letter writing stands out particularly in regard to conservation, as well as the pleasure in children's books that I wished to pass on to my children. The tradition of comic reading has also been transmitted to our children since their grandparents enjoy sending rolled bundles of 'Beano', 'Dandy' and other comics, every few weeks. The girls read them just as avidly as we once did and are free to read these, as they are most other kinds of material. While not underestimating our influence in their choice of reading matter, it is important to note that self-selection in reading material has been considered to be very important to literacy development (Chambers, 1973; Clark, 1976; Fox, 1985; Meek, 1982; Tucker, 1981).

The ownership of many books is one of several additional dimensions of literacy that we have added to our own family. The reading of those books is of course another. Many researchers including Brailsford (1985), Hayden (1985), and Juliebö (1985), have demonstrated the importance of reading to children at an early age. Wells (1985) suggests that "of prime importance is the parents' own enjoyment of reading" (p. 245). This enjoyment has no doubt been evident both in our own reading and in the reading we have done with our children. Bedtime stories and visits to the library with our children are patterns that did not exist in our own childhoods and, as mentioned previously, these factors are said to be of great importance in growth in literacy. There

is generally a greater variety of reading materials and more diverse reasons for writing in our home than when we were young. Also, because of the differing interests of their parents our children have much broader resources on which they can draw than we ourselves had as children.

Based on telephone interview data obtained in their extensive research study into early literacy, Harste et al (1984) found two main factors which seem related to literacy development in the home culture. One of these they termed "availability and opportunity to engage in written language events" (p. 42). They deemed important not the amount of literacy materials but the ready accessibility to them. "Parents and children have to be more or less constantly tripping over them" (p. 43). The second factor was what they termed "inclusion", whereby children were automatically included in most outings "more by virtue of the fact that the child was about" (p. 44) than for any particular purposes of literacy teaching. Schickedanz and Sullivan (1984), have thrown further light on this phenomenon by suggesting that "adult lives at home pull children into the adult world, a world in which literacy skills are constantly being put to use" (p. 12). This certainly seems to be a feasible explanation of the way in which Claire grew steadily in literacy.

More specific to Claire's particular growth in literacy a number of further observations can be made. Many of our memories of Claire's early reading behaviour are consistent

with the findings of Doake (1981), Hayden (1985), Holdaway (1979), and others. Strategies such as completion reading, ocho reading and co-operative reading were some of the overt processes that Doake observed in the reading behaviour of pre-schoolers during shared story reading and these strategies were also observed in Claire's pre-school experience with books. Rachel's memory of Claire pointing to words as they were being read indicates the type of eye-voice matching to which Doake refers and which indicates a fairly advanced knowledge of print.

When Claire started school she brought with her "linguistic and cultural capital accumulated through hundreds of thousands of occasions for practicing the skills and espousing the values the schools transmit" (Heath, 1983, p.368). Her first school experience facilitated considerable further growth in her literacy. The pedagogical soundness of many of the classroom activities I observed has been amply recognized in the literature: numerous opportunities for oral language development with children doing most of the talking (Barnes, 1975; Berry, 1985; Lindfors, 1980; Moffett, 1973; Rosen and Rosen, 1973; Tough, 1976); a diverse range of reading materials and considerable freedom of choice among those materials for children, along with teacher support and guidance (Barton, 1977; Chambers, 1973; Goodman, 1986; Meek, 1982; Tucker 1981); and children writing every day, in predictable situations, on their own topics, with relatively little emphasis on conventions

(Calkins, 1983, 1986; Graves, 1975, 1984; Holdaway, 1979). Furthermore, the school maintained close contacts with the community to the extent that the community was a highly active and integral part of the school (Britton, 1970).

In accepting from Claire's first days in school that she was not a potential reader and writer, but already a reader and writer, her teacher capitalized on Claire's intrinsic will to learn (Bruner, 1966). Many researchers have pointed to a belief in the young reader and writer as an extremely important factor in a child's ability to grow as a proficient reader and writer (Harste et al, 1984). Her self-motivation was also encouraged by the example of others around her who were reading and writing at more advanced levels. Indeed, with the support of the teacher, other students gave practical help and often made writing sessions highly interactive events (Dyson and Genishi, 1982).

By May of her second year in school, at which time I began to write down my observations of Claire's growth in reading and writing in a more systematic way, her literacy development might be summarized in the following way. Unlike the 5 year old that Bissex (1980) observed, Claire developed fluency in reading more readily than in writing. She never seemed to doubt that she was a reader and she read books consistently from the time she began on that first day of school. Unknown words did not appear to bother her, nor was she a word perfect reader; meaning was of primary importance. She was perhaps slightly less enthusiastic about reading as

she went through second grade and was happy to have me or her father read to her still. However, she began the habit of reading in bed at this time and began to request longer chapter books. She appeared to separate her reading at home from her school reading, sometimes expressing confusion about whether reading at school was really reading or actually writing, because "we do worksheets for it".

Writing always seemed to present more of a problem for Claire. From the beginning she was anxious about doing it the right way and was careful to ask for many spellings. Whether this attitude was due to personality, to external pressure, both home and school, or to less of a sense of comfort with writing because of more limited experience, is hard to say. It may well have been a combination of all three. Harste et al (1984) suggest that "the vulnerability which a language user feels under the conditions of writing and oral reading is a 'learned' vulnerability, not something inherent in the process itself" (p. 134). It would seem that Claire quickly learned this vulnerability, particularly in her writing. From an initially positive approach to both aspects of literacy she seemed gradually to be adopting a view of them as unequal in terms of the satisfaction they give. Calkins (1986), suggests that many children do become more apprehensive about writing as they progress through second and third grades. She speaks of "the concern for correctness and convention that I saw creeping in during second grade" (p.80) Such a concern was present for Claire

even at 5 years of age and it continued to impinge on her writing as she progressed through her first couple of years of school. When she first started school, writing was still alright as a social activity, especially when she had something she really wanted to say (Figure 8), but it demanded greater effort and was open to greater criticism - both from herself and from those around her, family as well as teachers.

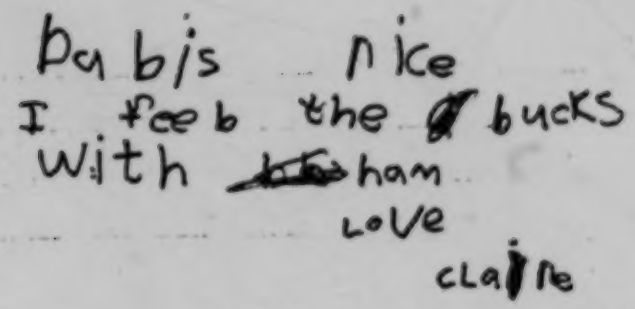


Figure 8: Dad is nice I feed the ducks with him Love Claire

The spontaneously produced message in Figure 8, for example, not only produced some comments within the family about the 'cuteness' of it, but also some possibly harmful remarks about the transposed b's and d's. Thus, by the time she reached her seventh birthday it was my perception that she still saw herself very much as a reader, but was not at all sure that she was also a writer.

CHAPTER V

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

> To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands.
> (Freire, 1973, p. 48)

Before deciding on the two major themes which will be used as a basis for discussion of my data, I alternately considered and discarded several possibilities. For example, it quickly became apparent that 'humour' is an inextricable part of the data, weaving its way through both reading and writing episodes. The contrasting themes of what might be loosely termed 'meaning' and 'mechanics' also loomed strongly as I read and reflected on my fieldnotes. The concept of 'social interaction' was yet another that became, in a number of different ways, a familiar notation in the margins of my data pages. In finally selecting different themes, it is not that the original patterns no longer seem viable but rather that they have been subsumed within larger categories, more general classifications with which I gradually began to view and interpret my data.

I have labelled my two major themes 'Making Connections' and 'Taking Control'. Since one of the original purposes of this study was to explore the links between reading and writing it is not surprising that 'Making Connections' should surface as a major theme; although the connections turn out

to be much more complex, more wide ranging and more deeply felt than I had initially envisaged. I will turn to a discussion of these connections later in the chapter, but first I would like to focus on the second theme, that of 'Taking Control'.

For purposes of analysis, I have chosen to describe the processes of reading and writing separately in this section. Inasmuch as I have increasingly come to see the similarities rather than the differences between these processes, such divisions are somewhat artificial. Nevertheless it is useful to describe them individually, especially since Claire herself does not seem to view them in the same light. In the natural flow of daily conversation she adopted a markedly different tone towards the two. The words she used to describe them, as well as the different ways that she approached reading and writing activities suggest a dissimilarity in her views of herself as a reader and writer.

Taking Control In Reading

> Reading is not walking on the words; it's grasping the soul of them.
>
> (Freire, 1985, p.19)

In reading through the data many times I could find very few instances of Claire displaying lack of confidence in the reading situation. Rather she showed self-reliance, in both her oral and silent reading, in the facility with which she handled books, and in her self-assured choice of reading materials and reading strategies.

Making Sense

The examples given in Chapter IV indicate that as Claire focussed on print she invariably tried to make meaning out of it. For instance, she asked repeatedly about the meaning of 'Miss' in a book title; she was intrigued at the juxtaposition of 'Hail Mary' and 'Disney' in the same headline and wanted to know what it meant that two such unlikely words should be written in the same sentence; another headline containing the name 'Ronald Reagan' caused her to go beyond the meaning of the text to try to make sense of the person behind the name. She was also, at the same time, reading me - trying to establish my attitudes towards both the man and the movie.

Focussing on print. There were many other occasions when I observed Claire noticing and commenting on the print around her and consciously constructing her own meaning out of it. One morning, just before leaving for school she looked at one of my reference books that was lying on the dining room table and asked:

> C: Reading Begins At Home what does that mean?
> M: What do you suppose it means?
> C: Well, like, that some kids learn to read at home -like those little books that I used to read?
> M: Yes, that's partly it, but also it's about how kids learn to read by-
> C: (interrupted) - By their parents reading books to them?
>
> (Notes: Dec.4, 1985)

I don't recall ever having discussed the notion of shared reading with Claire, hence it was somewhat surprising to hear

her say that kids learn to read by their parents reading to them. She was quite matter of fact about it though; it just seemed to make sense to her. She made a further comment on the book title later in the day, when she glanced at the book as she passed by it and said almost to herself:

> C: Pictures -you can read pictures too, that's probably what Reading Begins At Home means.

She seemed rather fascinated by the book, which had a cover picture of a child reading, and she was willing to explore a number of possible meanings of the title rather than settling for just one. The same morning she looked at a large Safeway advertisement in the paper:

> C: Sno -sno -sno-white, what's that? (as she was looking at an advertisement) ...Oh eggs. I thought it was something to do with Snow-white and the seven dwarfs...Why do they call 'em sno-white, because they're very white?
>
> (Notes: Dec.4, 1985)

On another occasion as we were driving in the car she began to comment on some of the street signs we passed, asking whether km meant kilometre and how far a kilometre was. Later she said:

> C: No Parking. That sign does mean no parking doesn't it, a P with a line through it?...How do they show Yes parking, just a P with no line through it?
>
> (Notes: Jan.19, 1986)

Each of these instances, and there were many others, were initiated by Claire who was taking notice of the print around her and asking questions about it when the meaning was not immediately clear. Even after receiving an explanation, or

after figuring it out for herself, she was often curious enough to probe further and seek alternate explanations or ask further questions.

Oral reading. While Claire's reading is not word perfect, in this sphere, too, reading is something that has to make sense to her. On several occasions during the course of the study it was possible to observe her oral reading behaviour when she spontaneously took a book, often a book of Shel Silverstein poems, and began to read aloud. On one such occasion while reading the poem Sick she read the word 'tonsils' as 'toenails' in the lines:

> My tonsils are as big as rocks,
> I've counted sixteen chicken pox
> (Transcript: Jan.1, 1986)

Certainly the word toenails was, strictly speaking, not correct. However, within the context of this poem where exaggeration is a large part of the humour, the miscue was a highly meaningful approximation, one which Silverstein himself might well approve. Most of her miscues when reading orally are omissions or substitutions of small function words such as 'a', 'the', 'in', 'on', which change the meaning of the text very little. When she does substitute her own word for one of the author's words it is usually a close visual and phonetic match to the original, and it is generally a real word and meaningful within the context.

Another interesting example of this was when Claire picked up a copy of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas saying "I like this book", and proceeded to read it aloud (Transcript: Dec. 31, 1985). She had heard it read on many occasions but had rarely read it herself to my knowledge. I turned the tape recorder on part way through, and the transcription of this reading again indicates Claire's sense of control over her reading. She had difficulty primarily with two or three unfamiliar words - 'midday', 'coursers', and 'tarnished' which she read as 'middy' 'cursers' and 'tartaned'. She also read the word 'wild' as 'wind'. In answer to my questions later about a couple of these words she said that 'middy' meant the middle of the day, hence she had the meaning, though not quite the pronunciation. She thought that 'cursers' was a different word for reindeer which was a meaningful assumption within the context. The use of the word 'wind' in the line "As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly" also seemed more than reasonable in this context. And the image of St. Nick with his clothes "all tartaned with ashes and soot;" left me with such a delightful image of a kilted, though grimy, St. Nick that I had no wish to tamper with it.

Generally then, in her oral reading, Claire portrayed a confidence that not only will the words delight but, whether they are in the form of poetry or prose, they will also make good sense, they will form a coherent, meaningful whole.

Listening to others read. This process of sense making, so often covert in the essentially private business of silent reading was illustrated more overtly on occasions when Claire was reacting to a story that was being read to her. One of the most interesting instances of this was when she listened to Es reading Treasure Island over a period of several days. He had decided to read it to all of us in anticipation of seeing a play version of it during a Christmas outing. Because of the rather archaic language and the tendency for the action to jump back and forth between two different camps in one section, it was not a particularly easy book to follow. However, Es made a valiant effort to maintain interest by explaining or asking questions about difficult words and concepts and by filling in missing information. On this particular evening Claire was doing a jigsaw puzzle as she listened and she appeared to be quite intent on the puzzle, sifting and sorting pieces. But she was clearly listening very carefully to the story since she stopped Es to ask questions several times.

E: (read) "He said-"
C: Who said?
...
E: (read) "There was no gunpowder-"
C: Why no gunpowder?
...
E: (read) "It was the last of the cannonade"
C: What's a cannonade?

But soon, Claire began to lose the thread of the story, she was no longer managing, even with help, to make meaning.

E: "The chiefs -" do you know who they were?

C: I don't really know what they mean at that bit.

She struggled on for a while longer but eventually made the decision to give up on this text.

C: What's climate?
Ca: It's the weather.
E: Why do you think the weather is their ally?
C: I don't know what's going on. I don't know what you're talking about.
(Notes: Nov.4, 1985)

As she said this she moved away from her puzzle and lay on the floor playing with the box lid of the puzzle. She asked no further questions and volunteered no answers to anyone else's questions. She was no-longer participating in this shared reading, since she was not making sufficient sense out of it to continue with it.

"As long as it makes sense". One final incident illustrates very aptly Claire's demand for coherence and understanding in the reading of a text. Claire and Rachel were discussing, one evening, how and why they re-read books. In what appeared to be a digression Claire said:

C: In one of those books I was reading I missed a page-
R: I love it when that happens, when you read it again you say "Oh, I don't remember that!" I always do that.
(We all laughed)
C: As long as it makes sense on the next page because not like 'and the ...blah, blah, blah.'
(Transcript: Mar. 3, 1986)

As she said the last sentence Claire demonstrated by pretending to read a book and then turned two pages together. The 'blah, blah, blah' and a startled look indicated that the text did not follow on from what she had been reading, in

which case she knew that she had missed a page. Note that she said first "As long as it makes sense on the next page...", the implication being that there is then no reason to believe that you have missed a page. In other words, Claire was stating her awareness of the relationship of the whole to the parts. She knew that what goes before affects what is to follow and must fit with it. If it does not do so then a reader might assume that she should go back and check again because maybe she has missed something that will help her construct a coherent text. The bottom line for Claire, in reading, is sense-making.

Facility With Books

Claire's ability to handle books, to manipulate them and use them for her own purposes was seen time and again throughout the year and in a variety of different ways.

Reading to others. One evening (Oct.4 1985), when I lay on the sofa not feeling well, Claire said that she would read me a story. She had brought home from the school library a book called The Biggest Bear by Lynd Ward and had not yet read it, so she decided to read this one to me. She was sitting on another sofa at right angles to me so that I was not able to see the book very well as she read. It was a large picture book with varying amounts of text on the page, and as I listened to the story I noted Claire's reading techniques with interest. Gradually I became aware that she showed the pictures to me only for two reasons; either

because she really liked the picture for its humour, as when the bear made a big mess of Johnny's house, or because she realized that I would not be able to derive the meaning from the written text alone. For example there was a build-up in the text to the understanding that there was a bear in the vicinity of Johnny's house. The text read ominously: "It was a bear alright!" But Claire turned to me, smiling, and said "Look!" and showed me the picture of a cute, unthreatening, baby bear. She did this at two other points in the story when she realized that a knowledge of the illustration was necessary for a full interpretation of the text.

I saw also that she used a familiar strategy to involve me more in the reading as she went along. On two occasions she asked me to predict what would happen. "What do you think they're going to do?" On one page where the text read "There was only one thing to do" she asked "What do you think that is?" When I replied "Get rid of him somehow", she asked again "Do you think he will?" and to my reply said "Well, let's see if he does." There was a complete reversal of our usual roles in this situation. Claire was so much in control of the shared story-reading that she was able to give due consideration to her audience as well as to her 'performance'.

Using parts of a book. Claire's confidence in the reading situation also extends to her familiarity with the parts of a book. She often asks about authors and illustrators, and enjoys reading about them in the

publisher's blurb, particularly when she becomes familiar with a body of their work, or on repeated readings of an individual text. After several readings of A Child's Christmas In Wales she commented:

> C: These are nice pictures, who did them? (Looked at cover where it said it was illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman) Oh yeh, she's the one who did the pictures in Sleeping Beauty. She's a good artist. I wish I could draw like her.
> (Notes: Jan.12, 1986)

On another occasion after a bedtime reading of several Shel Silverstein poems Claire looked at the poet's picture on one of the flaps and said he looked like a funny poet. We also had a short discussion about poetry and prose which were referred to in the blurb. Beverly Cleary was also discussed several times and Claire was intrigued with the mention on the back of the book of the Laura Ingalls Wilder award that Cleary had received.

Claire is aware of the copyright page, of where it is in the book and what it is used for. She uses indexes appropriately, as for example when she is looking for recipes in cookbooks. Invariably when looking for a story from an anthology she refers to the table of contents either to help her select a title or to find the page number for a story she wants. When she returns to the Ramona books for re-readings she often reads chapters selectively, choosing them by reference to the contents page. There is also evidence of her using this page sometimes as an advance organizer in her reading. She got out of bed one evening to say that her book

Help, I'm a Prisoner in the Library was too scary because the next chapter was called "The body on the floor". I sat with her as she read the chapter and it turned out to be quite innocuous but I noticed that she again looked ahead to see what mysteries were coming next.

Preparing to read. In December 1985, when her volume of reading was increasing, Claire began to plan what she would read next.

> C: Catherine was right, Superfudge is a really good book. It's so funny. I'm going to read Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing next. And then I'm going to read some more Ramona books. I don't want to read about when Ramona was at playschool though 'cos I'm past that. Maybe I'll go back to those later.
> (Transcript: Dec. 27, 1985)

Many similar examples show that Claire feels very much at ease as she chooses her books and decides when and what parts she will read. Not only does she look ahead to see what interests her and what her priorities are, but she knows why she prefers to read one book rather than another. Her purpose here was clearly to read about the continuing exploits of Ramona and at this time she did not see Ramona's past adventures as being relevant to her enjoyment and understanding of Ramona. Claire was aware, however, that her attitude might change. Even while stating her current preference she appeared to be open to new goals and new purposes for reading. In fact after she had read through all of the later books new purposes did emerge when she wished both to learn more about the younger Ramona and to extend a

very enjoyable reading experience. She then returned to the earlier books in the series without hesitation.

Her tendency to plan her reading was seen again before a visit to the library when she stated her purpose of taking out "long books" and of looking in the paperback section, rather than in the picture books (Notes: Feb.6, 1986). On several occasions, I also heard her discuss the content of particular books with her sisters in order to decide whether or not she would read them. Some weeks after reading Ramona the Brave she decided to re-read, not all of it, but "chapters I like", those in which Ramona was central. When her strategy of using the table of contents to decide on those chapters proved inadequate because she couldn't quite remember, she drew on her sister's memory as well:

> C: What's "Ramona's Problem" about, Rachel?
> R: She doesn't like to go to the Kemps.
> (Transcript: Mar. 3, 1986)

This self-activation of prior knowledge about a text occurred quite frequently and I came to see it as an important part of Claire's reading process, a way of tuning herself in to the book before she actually began to read.

A Tale Of Twenty Six Books

In general, Claire is comfortable either reading to herself for up to two hours at a time, sharing a picture book or incident from a story with others in the family, or reciting a humourous poem or cartoon strip to anyone close by. The following episode illustrates quite graphically her

facility with books, her sense of control in selecting books for herself, and her awareness of where she is in relation to her reading. I had gone into Claire's room one morning, to do some tidying. Instead, intrigued by the assortment of books lying around the room in various positions -some open face down, others closed; some piled on her bedside table, on her dresser or on her desk, others scattered in apparent random fashion on the floor- I made a list of the titles and their positions in the room. That evening, when Claire came in from school, I said that I would help her tidy some of them away and we discussed each of the books in turn. The following is a summary of some of the comments she made.

On her bedside table (open and face down)
Ellen Tebbits by Beverly Cleary (Just checked out of the school library yesterday and, "I've half read it so far")
James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl (Teacher is reading it to the class, Claire wants to read a chapter she missed)

On bedside table (closed)
December Secrets by Patricia Reilly Giff (Checked out of public library yesterday, chosen by Claire and read yesterday evening. "Didn't really understand it though so I'll have to read it again, leave it there")
Ribsy by Beverly Cleary ("I was gonna read it but I haven't yet. Leave it.")
Sprout by Jennifer Wayne (When casting round for a replacement for the Ramona books she'd thought she might try these Sprout books. "Haven't read this though, and don't want to really")
Sprout and the Helicopter (Read this one. "It was O.K. but not as good as the Ramona books")
Fish Face by Patricia Reilly Giff (Re-read again one evening last week."We can put that one away.")
Owl Question and Answer Book (We'd looked at it together 2 nights ago. "I want to leave it out 'cos we haven't finished it yet.")
Jimmy and the Big Machine and other stories. Claire's own book of stories that she'd asked me to read last night.("That's Nanny's copy, we must send it to her.")

On the floor beside her bed
Beezus and Ramona by Beverly Cleary (Just finished reading, "We can put it away")
Family Circus: Peace Mommy Peace (Read some of it in bed last night: "It's funny")
The Enormous Crocodile by Roald Dahl (Said she re-read "...not long ago, this week sometime" By this point she was laughing as I said "When did you find time to read all these books?")
Socks by Beverly Cleary (Hasn't read it but is going to "soon")
Ramona Forever by Beverly Cleary (Was looking at it to see whether she could use it for her school book cover assignment "We can put it away")

On chest of drawers (open, face down)
The Witches by Roald Dahl (Began it a couple of weeks ago, was scared by it, but says she wants to finish it "So leave it out please".)
A Necklace of Raindrops by Joan Aiken (Began to read it when I said it was one of Catherine's favourites, but hasn't read all the stories yet.
Milly Molly Mandy Again by Joyce Lankester Brisley (Didn't really like it, said I could put it back.)

On chest of drawers (closed)
Gifts of Writing - Creative Projects with Words and Art by Susan and Stephen Judy (Said she might make some fortune cookies with valentine messages inside from this book)

On top of low cupboard
Henry and the Paper Route by Beverly Cleary
Henry and Beezus by Beverly Cleary
The House At Pooh Corner by A. A. Milne
("You can put all of those away for now.")

On desk, closed
2 Garfield books
The Three Sillies by Margot Zemach
Joanie's Magic Boots by Brenda Bellingham
A Bear Called Paddington by Michael Bond
Dear Mr. Henshaw by Beverly Cleary
Ramona The Brave by Beverly Cleary
("I've read all of those except Dear Mr. Henshaw, but you can put them all away. ")
(Notes: Feb.7, 1986)

Claire was quite clear here about what should be done with each of the books. She knew why most of them were not on the bookshelves; either they had just been read, were

still being read, or would be read very soon. I simply went through each of the titles in turn and she was able to evaluate and tell me whether or not they should be put away. For this particular child, living in a household where a certain level of clutter is tolerated appears to be important to her literacy development. Indeed there are numerous instances in the data of Claire picking up a book that just happens to be lying on a coffee table or a counter top and reading for anywhere from a few minutes to an hour or more. Some of these books undoubtedly also eventually contributed to the piles in her room. Thus, what appeared to be a haphazard assortment of books actually told a tale of her past and current reading, her future reading plans, and especially of her ability to determine her own reading environment. Claire was able to confidently assume responsibility for picking and choosing between the books, reading or re-reading them, dipping into them selectively and occasionally, with my help, replacing them on her shelves.

Adjusting Strategies To Text Difficulties

Claire invariably displayed confidence about her ability to tackle difficult reading material in ways that she herself has found useful:

M: Did you read any of your book today? (we were visiting my friend and Claire took a book to read)
C: No I didn't. I can only read books like that when I'm in bed at night, or on my own.
M: Oh, why is that?
C: Because I need to concentrate or else I don't understand it
M: Oh I see. Is that only with this kind of book or

with all books?
C: Well with books that I've read before I don't need to concentrate so much 'cos I already know what it's about, so I can read it when other people are around.
(Notes: Jul. 17, 1985)

Claire was referring here to The Beast in Ms. Rooney's Room, a book from the Polk Street Kids series by Patricia Reilly Giff. From about the age of 7 years she had been interested in reading longer chapter books but found that many of them were still too difficult for her. She found one book by this author when we were browsing in the library one day and, finding them to be at the right level for her, began asking for others in the series. This was the third that she had read.

I was surprised by Claire's matter of fact awareness of her own reading processes and by her ability to maintain control over her own reading by consciously setting a book aside when she realized that the best circumstances for reading it did not prevail. This short conversation also brought to my attention her propensity for re-reading. I did not, at this time, pursue this notion of re-reading, so it was not clear at this point whether she intentionally re-reads for the purpose of obtaining a better understanding of a book. However, she did articulate an awareness of the varying degrees of concentration necessary for reading familiar and unfamiliar text. She was aware of potential obstacles to satisfactory reading but had adopted her own strategies to enable her to overcome these obstacles.

Three Reasons To Re-read

A similar conversation three months later caused Claire to elaborate further on the value of reading a book more than once. We were eating supper in a restaurant and Claire had taken another Reilly Giff book with her on the basis that she needed something to do when we delayed too long over coffee. Sure enough, as I sat drinking my coffee she manouevred her way into my chair and sat on my lap reading quietly. After a while I asked her:

M: Are you enjoying that book?
C: Yeh, I like her books. When I read Fishface the first time I didn't understand it very well.
M: Oh, why was that?
C: Well first I'd read one chapter or two, and then maybe I wouldn't read some for a few days and then I'd read some more, and on and on like that.
M: So you mean because you didn't read it all at one time it was hard to understand?
C: Yeah sort of, it was hard to remember it.
M: So then you read it again?
C: Yes and then it was easier because I already knew some of it, and then I could understand more of it. I've read it three times now.
M: Last night you said that some of your other books looked sort of too long to read, but this one looks much longer.
C: Yeh, but it's easier to read and it's interesting.
M: Is it easier to read when it's interesting?
C: Mmm, because you just want to read it and find out what's happening. And anyway there's no hard words in this book.
M: What do you do if you come to a hard word that you don't know?
C: Well, I just read on and see if I can get it later.
M: What if you don't get it?
C: Oh I always do, I know all the words.

(Notes: Oct.28, 1985)

At this point we were interrupted and I never did establish whether Claire's confidence about knowing "all the words" referred only to this book or to all books that she reads.

There certainly seems to be no doubt in her own mind though that she is capable of handling any difficulties that might arise in her reading. In fact there were few instances during the year of Claire asking for help with her reading, and any questions that did arise usually related to word meanings rather than pronunciations.

Claire's initial comments in the section quoted above indicate that she was grappling with a reading problem that more experienced readers may no longer remember. She was struggling with the transition to chapter books, lengthier novels which can no longer be read in one session. Not only must she cope with the varied demands of what was still a relatively new skill for her, but she had to learn to hold the details of the story in memory over an extended period of time. Initially she spoke of this added demand as making it harder to understand the book and, in elaborating further, she included also the memory aspect of the problem. In saying that the book was easier to read a second or third time because she already knew some of it, she was aware that understanding of a text is not an instant achievement, but an on-going, evolving process.

As well as re-reading in order to build up her understanding of a story, there were also many instances of Claire practicing a familiar text in order to master it. Just as she practiced throwing and catching a ball with her Dad until she managed thirty without dropping it, so too Claire read and re-read stories until she was satisfied with her

performance. Many times, even at the height of her immersion in the Ramona series, I observed her reading books that she had apparently outgrown a couple of years previously. Very recently, she requested a bedtime story from her Terry Jones Fairy Tales. As she looked through the table of contents, deciding which two or three she wanted to hear, she came across one entitled "The Corn Dolly" and she said:

C: I remember when I could only read this story in this book and I used to read it over and over again to practice it.
M: Did you, I didn't know that.
C: Yes, I like how it goes, and I always used to read it in bed. So after I read it lots of times I got good at reading it.

(Notes: Jun.16, 1986)

This chance remembrance of a strategy that worked for her perhaps eighteen months previously suggests again that not only is Claire comfortable with her pattern of re-reading but that she is aware of her reasons for following such a pattern. Short stories, it seems can be read many times, as practice reading, until they are mastered, while longer books can be read more than once just to understand them better.

A third, and perhaps more noticeable reason for re-reading, the sheer enjoyment of a good read, is again marked by Claire's awareness of the process. While comprehension and enjoyment are not mutually exclusive, Claire certainly seems able to make some distinction between them as purposes for re-reading. Some books she goes back to because she knows that there was much that she missed the first time. With other books, most noticeably the Ramona books which she read intensively between November 1985 and

May 1986, her initial comprehension was good but she returns to them for the sheer pleasure and enjoyment they bring. Her engagement with these books has been remarkable for its intensity from the beginning. In fact if any one point in her reading growth could be noted as the beginning of truly independent reading I would have to choose Claire's meeting with Ramona. It was her total engagement with these books that really made her want to read and that drew her into new ways of exploring books.

Although she did not explicitly state it at first, Claire obviously identified quite closely with Ramona. This sense of affinity with a character, the ability to see the world from her point of view seems to be of great importance to the reading process. A more detailed description of how this kinship evolved will be given in the "Making Connections" section. For present purposes however, I wish to show how the affinity allowed Claire to gain still further control over her reading and to move into a deeper reading of these favourite books.

An Amateur Critic

Claire's comments and questions when she first read the Ramona books related almost entirely to incidents in the books and to connections that she made between characters and events in the books and those in her own life. As Claire began to read the books again however her comments and questions changed somewhat in nature. On occasion I asked her what she liked about the books and over a period of weeks she

struggled to articulate what she did like about them. I thought that she might find it easier to say why she liked Ramona if she compared it with something else and so I asked her:

M: How is this one better than... say Sprout?
C: "It doesn't just say this and that and this and that. It goes onto that thing for a while.
M: You mean she doesn't dot around, she follows through on one situation or one incident. She follows it through to the end?
C: Yeah, and then she goes on to a new one. But she keeps on that one for maybe two chapters.
(Notes: Jan.31, 1986)

Claire seemed here to be recognizing the satisfaction in reading books which contained a relatively small number of characters who were involved in situations that were described and explored in detail, rather than in a cursory or hurried fashion. At this time also, she spontaneously began to make observations about the writing style and techniques of the author. One evening as I was writing at the dining room table, she came over to me with Ramona the Brave in hand.

C: Beverly Cleary is a good writer because she expre-... well whoever's talking she like, she shows their feelings.
M: So you understand how they feel?
C: Yeh, she tells like how Ramona feels.
M: Does she tell or does she show?
C: What do you mean?
M: Well does she just say: Ramona feels.... or does she describe what she's doing so that you know from her actions how she feels?
C: Well, both. She tells and she shows. It's hard to explain....

She went back to the sofa and continued to read. A few minutes later I asked her:

M: So you said that you like Beverly Cleary because she showed their feelings, you understand how they feel?
C: Mm hmm Yeh, Just here like -(she came over with her book to show me a paragraph and read) "She was wild with impatience..." Like that.
M: (joined in) "Although Ramona was standing with her nose pressed against the front window, she was wild with impatience..." So she starts off telling you she's wild with impatience and then she tells you all the different ways she's impatient.
C: Yeh she says like 'wild'.

(Transcript: Mar.3, 1986)

On reading the paragraph myself I could see why it would appeal. The writer presented, in a few words, an effective picture of Ramona apparently standing quietly as she looked out of the window. But the use of the word 'wild' gave a very different picture of inner turmoil. Claire obviously felt that Cleary had captured very adequately that childhood exuberance and enthusiasm which must so often be supressed under a more socially acceptable demeanour. She pointed to 'wild' as the key word which makes the sentence work so well. She concluded this segment of the conversation by saying:

C: ...she's a good writer.
M: She certainly is.

But this was not the end of it for a few minutes later Claire again said:

C: She gets good ideas from places.
M: She gets good ideas from what?
C: From like the world.
M: From the world?
C: No like from different places you know like, in there, like from school or somewhere.
M: Yeh -from what she sees going on around her -from her own life. We wondered about that before didn't we if she got the ideas from her own kids. Because they seem so real?
C: Mmm hmm. What?
M: We thought maybe she got the ideas from her own kids

because they seem so real.

C: Mmm hmm.

(Transcript: Mar.3, 1986)

On this particular day, although she was just as engrossed as usual in her reading, there was also a reflective air about her, and a need to articulate some of the thoughts that came to mind as she read in a more critical fashion. My comments were hardly needed and barely listened to. What was important was Claire's own desire to reflect and talk. A few days later her comments became more focussed on the specifics of the meaning of a particular section in Ramona Quimby Age 8.

C: I know I've asked you this before, but I still don't understand this bit...

She then began to read aloud a paragraph, but stopped half way and said:

C: Oh I see! Aunt Bea burst into tears, not Mrs Quimby. Now I get it. It just wasn't written very clearly because I kept thinking it was Mrs Quimby who started to cry.

(Notes: Mar.8, 1986)

This was, as she said, a passage that she'd puzzled over before and I thought that I'd explained the misunderstanding the first time. Obviously though, it was still not clear - and not through any deficiency on Claire's part. She was in no doubt that this was a weakness in the writing, and didn't hesitate to say so.

When she saw good writing she was also confident in expressing her opinion. Several days after the above

incident she was reading the same book and began to laugh out loud at parts of it. She said:

C: I like this part where it says "her mean old parents" (laughed) "mean old"...it's not in brackets though.
M: How do you mean?
C: Well it says "Her parents, her mean old parents, ..." and they didn't put that bit in brackets.
M: Oh I see, that's sort of extra to the story you mean and it could have been written in brackets?
C: Yeh, sometimes writers do that.

A little later she said:

C: I like this part too, "It was done, flat but done (laughed). It's talking about the cornbread they made.
M: Yes that says a lot in just a few words doesn't it?

And again:

C: This part doesn't have commas to set it apart, "With his most wicked grin."
M: Well it doesn't really need them. Can you see why?
C: Well there's nothing else after?
M: Mmm hmm. She doesn't say it in the middle of saying something else. It's the end part of the sentence.
(Notes: Mar.14, 1986)

This chapter, when Ramona and her sister cooked supper, was one of Claire's favourites and she had read it many times, often saying how funny it was. This time, rather than just reading it and enjoying it she was consciously noticing and commenting on the author's use of language in these passages. She was looking closely at the sentence structure to see exactly how the author incorporated the humour. She saw one instance that appealed to her and noticed that the author didn't use a grammatical device that she had previously seen other writers use. She then picked out two other examples where humour was achieved in a similar way and she made her own comparisons between the three examples. In

a sense her intention seemed to be to dig out even more humour and she achieved this through analysis of the writing. In examining the structure and language of the writing in this way after multiple readings, Claire was displaying both a desire and an ability to see the text in more sophisticated ways. From immediate engagement with the books to an enjoyment of the humour in the familiar family situations, Claire was now in sufficient control of her reading to critically analyse the author's writing in an effort to understand what made the books so successful.

Sense Of Equality With Other Readers

The majority of Claire's early literacy experiences have contributed to her sense of herself as a reader. This feeling is reinforced by others at home who enjoy talking about books with her and who recommend their own favourites with every expectation that she will be able to read them. On one occasion she was so keen to read a book that Catherine had read and raved about that she asked me to read it to her since it was quite a difficult book. I read the first couple of chapters of The Indian in the Cupboard at bedtime and she did not want to stop. When I insisted, she said that she would read it herself and over the next few days she managed to read through it saying that there were some words that she didn't know but she could understand enough of it (Notes: April 1, 1986). Moreover, Claire increasingly sees herself as an equal reading partner in terms of sharing and recommending books. On many occasions she asks her sisters,

"Have you read such and such a book?" She does so not to ask for an evaluation but rather to recommend it as a book worth reading. I also heard her discuss the Ramona books on at least three occasions with friends, and when one friend stayed for a sleepover she read her a chapter of Ramona and her Father after telling her how good these books were. (Notes, Nov.29, 1985). When another, usually influential, friend declared that she thought the Ramona books were boring, Claire firmly disagreed with her. My interest in her reading also encouraged her to recommend books to me. After she had told me several times that I ought to read Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing by Judy Blume, she asked again:

> C: Yeh, well Mum Have you read um Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing?
> M: Um, no I haven't, I don't think...
> C: Well I sai...I asked you to.
> M: I haven't had time have I? I have a lot of work to do this week. One of these days when I've got a spare half hour...
>
> (Transcript: Jan.21, 1986)

Her eagerness to share books with me ensured that I did read this book shortly after. Such incidents demonstrate quite clearly Claire's view of herself as a reader. She is not a beginning reader or a second class reading citizen but a reader who reads material that she knows others, including adults, can enjoy. It thus comes very naturally to her to recommend books she enjoys to those around her.

The Importance Of Reading

Although many of the conversations we had about reading concerned reading for enjoyment, Claire showed an awareness

that while reading is indeed fun, it is also of vital importance to daily living. She commented a number of times about the usefulness of reading and she readily gave her opinion when I was considering the topic myself. One morning during the Christmas holidays, I was reading a paper entitled "Understanding Reading Disability: A Case Study Approach", when Claire wanted to know what it was about. When I told her it concerned three men who hadn't learned to read in school and were trying to learn now, she first of all related it to children she knew who were experiencing problems.

Watching me underline parts as I read, she asked if she could help by underlining too. As I read and she underlined, she showed great interest in Bill, Jack and Charlie and asked who they were and whether they were "...in a family". She was particularly concerned about how their inability to read had affected their everyday lives. Claire concluded that if people come out of school not being able to read:

> C: Well then they wouldn't be able to do much stuff, because you have to read in almost everything.

Later, after deciding she would cook some cornbread, as she measured out the ingredients Claire reinforced her point by saying:

> C: By the way Mum they wouldn't be able to cook, those people, because they can't read.
> (Transcript: Jan.3, 1986)

She later re-considered this notion and said that maybe they would memorise some recipes. Her comments indicated however, that she was reflecting on her earlier comments and

applying her knowledge to new contexts. Observations such as this led me to believe that even at this relatively young age Claire was not only in control of her own reading, but was aware of the great importance of reading as a tool for making one's way in the world. Her concern for those who have not acquired the ability to read indicates her sure sense of the power of literacy to affect a person's life.

Taking Control In Writing

> If we take away the intending person, writing becomes a way of giving rather than taking control.
> (Dyson, 1984, p. 623)

In general, Claire's orientation towards writing has been markedly different from that of reading, although some convergence of attitudes was evident throughout the year. During the first couple of months of the study, her spontaneous comments about writing were quite negative, as they had been for most of the school year. She rarely chose to write at home and often dragged her feet if she had to complete school writing assignments. As in reading, she appeared to be aware of potential problems and pitfalls, but in her writing she seemed unprepared or unwilling to overcome them.

Writing Is Boring

One evening, as Claire was colouring a picture that she had drawn, she looked across to where I was writing a letter and made the following comments:

C: I don't like writing, except for printing, 'cos printing's easy... you don't have to, like, you just do printing over and over about 6 times
M: Why don't you like writing?
C: Because it's boring. Sometimes you go quickly and the printing doesn't go right and then you have to do it over and it gets boring.
M: But isn't it boring to do printing over and over again?
C: Well no, 'cos you just have to copy it, you don't have to think it up and then make it look nice.
(Notes: Jun. 24, 1985)

Just as Claire was aware of the difficulties of reading a new and challenging book over a period of days, balancing reading ability with memory, so too she was aware that there were many things to be attended to in producing a piece of writing. But where she was willing to wait for an appropriate time to read a more difficult book or to read a book several times to facilitate her understanding, in writing she coped by opting for the simple, predictable tasks. She saw quite clearly the conflicting demands of getting her thoughts down quickly and, at the same time, neatly and correctly, and was prepared to dismiss the whole process as "boring". Claire seemed, at this time, to use the general label of 'writing' to include both the content and the mechanics of the task. The telling phrase "think it up" suggests that she saw writing as something 'out there', almost independent of her, but which she must somehow produce, while at the same time worrying about the other elements of writing - the elements of convention by which her writing is so often evaluated.

Writing As A Social Activity

About a month after the above conversation we went on vacation, a long car drive to California. By then somewhat concerned about CTaire's recalcitrant attitude towards writing I was looking for ways to make writing more enjoyable for her and more a part of her daily life. I suggested to the whole family that we each keep a journal on the trip and in spite of initial comments about my "crazy ideas", the notion was accepted. We managed to write in our books most of the way down to Los Angeles, usually in the evenings at our campsites. We'd then read them to each other, or sometimes we'd read each other's aloud. Claire wrote only six entries but even this small amount of writing led to some insights into her growth in this area.

Initially, Claire was the most resistant to the journal writing idea. Her first three entries were written laboriously with continual comments about not knowing what to write. She was highly preoccupied with spelling words correctly and insisted on being told the right spelling before moving on. "How do you spell sweaty... imagine... desert?" (Notes: July 30, 1985) "How do you spell Faithful...steams... fountain...Yellowstone...picture?" (Notes:July 31, 1985). She enjoyed hearing what everyone else had written but would not read her own aloud. She did want to participate though and asked me to read it for her. On the second evening she noticed a good deal of giggling going on between Rachel and Catherine as they tried to think

of amusing things to say. Claire decided that she wanted to write something funny too and added a sentence about a bathroom stop!

The first couple of entries demonstrate Claire's general attitude towards writing at this time. She showed an unwillingness to take ownership over her writing either in content or conventions. She relied heavily on me, both to suggest what she might say and to provide support in spelling and punctuation. Her preoccupation was almost entirely with form, and despite my efforts to encourage her to attempt words herself she simply would not proceed until she was sure she had the words spelled right. It was her choice to write correctly and she in fact took control by this slow, deliberate, careful process.

On the fourth day, Claire sat down and wrote spontaneously for the first time. She didn't ask what she should write but simply started. As she wrote she added little curlicues to the letters in the first couple of lines. She seemed to feel free to be playful with her writing by embellishing it in this way. The twirls were somehow a personal way of making it "look nice" which were quite unlike the school way that concerned her so often, but which perhaps were more significant for writing growth. The girls had been amused that day by Es saying that everything "bonked " him out. Claire said "Dad, is it O.K. if I write something about you?" to which he replied "Of course." She added a last sentence and then brought it to show me saying "Can we read

it in the tent again? I want to read mine" (Notes: Aug.2, 1985). Her enjoyment of the light-hearted sharing sessions on previous evenings had now developed into a wish for more active participation. The next entry was her longest, and again it was written without the encouragement needed previously. She changed her format somewhat this time, first saying what we'd done that day and then adding the "news". This was a very similar format to the one used by Catherine on the previous day, and was also a way of bringing in more humour (Figure 9).

The evening writing sessions petered out at this point since there seemed to be too many other things to do. Although Claire lost interest and didn't write again once the social nature of the activity disappeared, it was apparent that even in this short period she had begun to recognize the possibility that she could write something that others would be interested to hear or read.

What is Writing Anyway?

The first weeks back in school in September were marked by several recurring negative comments about writing. A math homework exercise was decried both because it was "too easy" and for the amount of writing that was required in order to fill in a blank in the sentence, with the appropriate number.

C: All this writing. I hate writing and it's hard to copy it.

(Notes: Sept.7, 1985)

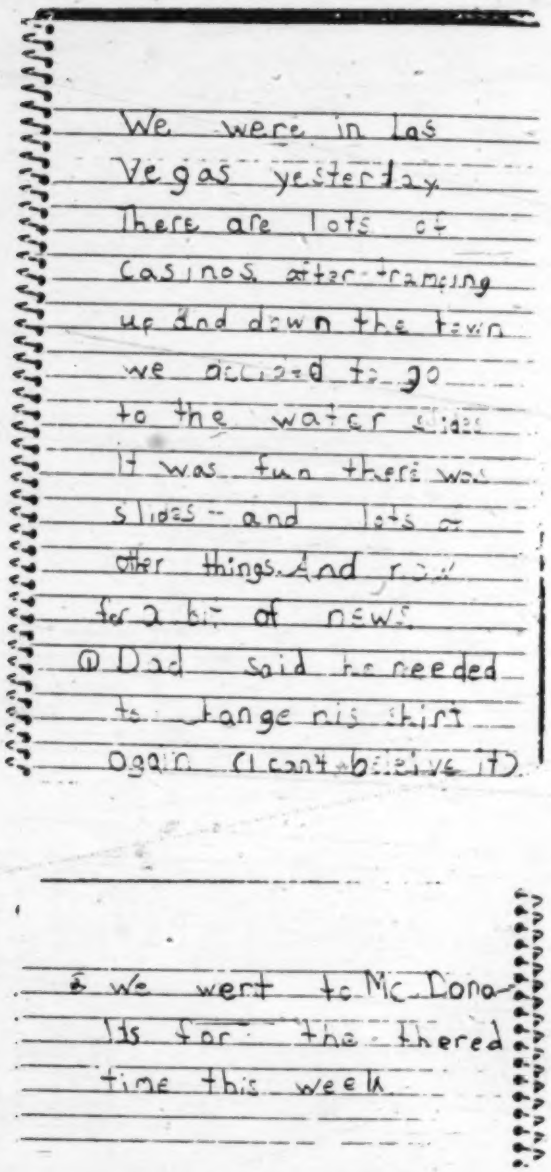

We were in Las
Vegas yesterday
There are lots of
casinos after framing
up and down the town
we decided to go
to the water slides
It was fun there was
slides - and lots of
other things. And now
for a bit of news.
@ Dad said he needed
to change his shirt
again (I can't believe it).
& we went to Mc Dona-
lds for the thered
time this week.

Figure 9: Sharing Her Journal Writing

I sat with Claire for a while and read out the sentences so that she did not have to keep referring back to the original, and she then completed the exercise fairly happily. The exercise, in itself, seemed to be devoid of purpose for Claire, but my participation helped compensate. A few days later when completing a language arts exercise at home, Claire again pouted and complained:

> C: I don't wanna do this.
> M: What's wrong?
> C: It's boring, we have to write in complete sentences.
> M: Do you know what that means?
> C: No, yes, I dunno. It has to make sense I think.
> (Notes: Sept.10, 1985)

This comment brought to mind Frank Smith's observation that "Punctuation, capitalization and other 'rules' of grammar are essentially circular and meaningless to anyone who cannot already do what is being 'explained'" (Smith, 1983, p. 559). Thus rather than attempt any definitions or explanations, I again helped Claire by showing her how to use some of the words in the question in order to form her answer in a sentence. Both of these incidents caused me to reflect as I have in the past on Claire's understanding of what writing is, and what she meant when she said that writing is boring. I wondered whether exercises of this nature made any sense to her and whether the meaning she attached to the word 'writing' was clear to her.

A third incident around the same time confirmed my hunch that Claire did indeed see much of the writing she was obliged to do as quite meaningless. She brought home an 'All

about me´ worksheet on which she had written that the subject she liked the least was Math. Es expressed surprise saying that he thought she did like Math. Claire replied immediately "Oh yes I do, but it doesn´t matter what you put as long as you write something" (Notes: Sept. 8, 1985). She realized that the content of her written answer was not important, only that there must be an answer, thus anything would do. While the word made sense in a superficial way, it made no real sense in Claire´s life. For Claire this was simply not a meaning based activity at that time, and she was well aware of that fact.

In contrast, another homework episode around this time with which Claire also asked for help illustrates that she was able to make meaning out of an assigned piece of writing. On September 18th she asked me to help her to think of an ending to a story in her workbook. It took only a small amount of probing for Claire to verbally tell an ending which she already seemed to have worked out. The only help I gave was to listen and to make the odd encouraging comment. When she finished writing I also helped her to edit for correct punctuation and spelling, because these are valued in school writing. Again, my participation allowed this to be more of a social activity and Claire enjoyed this aspect of it. I sensed that my presence alone made the task less of a chore, so that she completed the assignment quite readily, chatting about other things as she wrote. There was little engagement with the writing however, since she firmly slammed her book

shut as soon as she had finished and answered a definite "No!" when I asked if she would like to read it over. There was no desire to integrate her reading and writing; the former was an activity she loved to do, the latter one she had to do.

Two weeks later, Claire made a comment at the supper table one evening when the conversation had turned to talk of school work:

> C: I don't like writing in sentences Mum.
> M: How do you mean writing in sentences?
> C: You know, when you have to write a sentence from a book and put in the missing word.
> M: Oh, I see. You mean a sentence from a workbook?
> C: Yeah, it's boring to write a whole lot of stuff just to write one word..... I like writing stories O.K. but not those sentences.
>
> (Notes: Oct.3, 1985)

While I sympathised with her feelings about writing "A whole lot of stuff just to write one word", I was interested to note that she was beginning to distinguish for herself the difference between writing that is little more than copying, and writing that has some elements of creativity and intentionality. This was almost a reversal of her statement four months previously that "printing's easy ...because you just have to copy it ..." She appeared to be growing beyond the tendency to use the term "writing" as a catch-all phrase to cover all those activities that she disliked. It is possible that her perception of story writing as worthwhile may have been influenced by my own periodic attempts to encourage her interest in this form of writing. However, one of the lessons I learned very early was that she was not

easily swayed by my suggestions in areas where she was lacking in confidence or perceived expertise. Her comments then seemed to reflect a growing awareness of the many shades of meaning of the word 'writing'.

Writing As A Chosen Activity.

Her growing awareness of the social nature of writing caused a surprising development a few weeks later. One evening after supper, as I was reading the newspaper Claire said:

C: Mum let's do something together.
M: O.K. Do you want to play a game? "Guess Who" maybe?
C: No o o... I know, let's write a story.
M: (Surprised, but trying not to seem so) Alright, that's a nice idea.
C: I know, you tell me what to say, and I'll write it down. (She laughed mischievously as I gave her a quizzical sideways look)... No, I'll tell you what to say and you write it down.
M: O.K. We could do it on the word processor, if you like.
C: Yeah, 'cos then it's easy to change parts and stuff.
(Notes: Oct. 8, 1985)

In retrospect, I am still surprised by Claire's wish to write a story in place of our usual story reading or games playing. My surprise indicates, perhaps, the degree to which I myself lacked confidence in her ability or desire to overcome her negative attitude towards writing. It is difficult to say what may have prompted this development although it should be noted that in our ensuing discussion about topics, Claire's first thought was to write "in our own words", the story of a play that she and Catherine had put on in a cardboard puppet theatre the previous evening. It had

been an impromptu performance, and they had had such difficulty trying to follow the script and manipulate the puppets at the same time that I had suggested that they could just 'ad lib', since they already knew the story of "The Three Little Pigs". Perhaps, then, this had been the stimulus that precipitated the story writing episode. There had been some fun involved in presenting the puppet show and there was some purpose involved in re-writing the story in her own words. However it remained just a starting point, because the activity quickly moved in a somewhat different direction.

The end result of Claire's suggestion to write a shared story was a small, limited edition book (Graves, 1983) containing three stories about 'Jimmy The Leprechaun'. The process of selecting the topic for the story and of starting the tale will be described in the 'Making Connections' section of this chapter. While it would be possible to do a highly detailed analysis of these story writing episodes which spanned a two month period, for reasons of limited space I have attempted instead to abstract a number of salient features for discussion in this section.

Assuming Control

It is important to observe first of all that this was much more Claire's project than it was mine. In fact, she chose a particularly busy time for me to initiate the activity - a fact which is of significance in itself in that she may have seen it as a way of sharing more of my time. She

had watched me at work on the computer for the past eight months and had seen me write stories as well as academic papers on the word processor, but until now, she had not used the program herself. It was Claire who proposed the first story and it was she who decided that Jimmy should have further adventures. She also suggested that we should make them into a book "Like the one you made with Nadia" (a colleague). Because Christmas was approaching, she came up with the idea of giving it to relatives as a Christmas present, so that this gave a more practical purpose to the activity, not to mention a wider readership to her writing, and also served to set limits and give a sense of closure. The writing episodes were eight in all, with two of the stories completed in three sessions each, and one of them in two. Central to all of the episodes was the element of choice. Because it was Claire's choice to write and to select her own topics she was automatically assuming control of the situation.

Strategies For Gaining Control

Once Claire had taken that first step of wanting to write she was able to adopt her own means of achieving her desired ends. I observed a number of ways in which she acquired or refined strategies for gaining increasing control over the writing process.

Planning. Initially, there appeared to be less tendency for Claire to prepare and plan for writing than for reading, perhaps because she was often unsure about the purpose of

writing, and had little real enagagement with it. As time went on though, she assumed her own goals and purposes for writing: "I´m going to make it into a neat book and then we can draw some pictures for it too" (Transcript: Dec.14, 1985). She began to verbalize her writing plans not only during the writing sessions but in between times too: "I´m going to make Jimmy more of a pest in the next part" (Notes: Dec. 10, 1985). As in the short writing assignment from school when she had to write an ending to a story in a workbook, Claire almost always knew what she wanted to say when we sat down at the beginning of each session. She often asked "Shall I say....?" or "Does this sound O.K.?" and rarely said that she didn´t know what to write. When she reached a difficult point in her story, as for instance when Jimmy had been carried away by the river and wondered how he would find his way home, she seemed to see it as a challenge, and between sessions she pondered various solutions. This eventually involved looking at a map of Edmonton to see how a river could meander back and forth, and in this way she came up with a solution to her problem -Jimmy had fallen in at the beginning of a big loop and climbed out at the end of the loop so he still wasn´t very far from his home. She also speculated about possible titles for her stories:

> C: "Mum I think I´ll call my story ´The Long River´."
> (Notes: Nov. 18, 1985)

A few days later she had a new plan:

> C: I´ve decided to call my story ´The Day Jimmy Ignored His Mother´."

M: Oh, have you changed your mind?
C: Yes, I like that title better. It tells more what the story's about.

(Notes: Nov. 22, 1985)

The mere fact of her talking about her writing when she was removed from the actual writing context was a considerable sign of growth in Claire's writing. However she was also beginning to recognize the relationship between what she wanted to say and how she said it, the integral relationship between meaning and form. Her confidence was growing as she was able to put her images and ideas into writing.

Making sense. As Claire began to see real reasons for writing she demonstrated an awareness that her text should make sense to those who would read it. When she wrote a letter, for instance, she wanted to know whether the recipients had access to the same information she had:

C: They don't know what A.G. Bear is do they?

and again later:

C: Oh Mum, do they know we have a cat?

(Transcript: Jan. 2, 1986)

Occasional comments when she was writing her stories also indicated her cognizance of the need to make things cohere for the reader:

C: (re-read what she had written) 'Jimmy tried to find the kitchen but he couldn't see it so he carefully climbed onto a bookshelf, so that he didn't make it fall...' (she added) 'like he did at home.'
M: Ah right, yes.
C: 'Cos they remember...

(Transcript: Dec. 14, 1985)

Her words "'Cos they remember" were said as an aside, as if she was voicing her thoughts aloud. Claire was referring to the reader who on reading this would recall the earlier incident when Jimmy knocked things off the bookshelf, precipitating all of his later adventures. She shows here that she was not only writing with the sense of a reader peering over her shoulder, but she was also relating back to an earlier part of the draft in order to add an extra weight of meaning to the words "like he did at home." She was carefully composing her meaning by paying attention to the parts and also by seeing how they related to the whole.

Revision. Claire has been much less familiar with the idea of revision in writing than in reading. In fact much of her initial confusion and frustration with writing seemed to be a result of feeling that she had to get everything right first time. When she asked me to help her with a story ending, in September 1985, she displayed a definite unwillingness to read over what she had written; there was no desire to re-see this text. Certainly, though, she tended to revise fairly consistently at the sentence level, re-reading often to ensure that her text was developing in the way she intended. This type of revision took place during the first draft of writing, which still, for Claire, tends to be the only draft. Claire does not, as yet, spontaneously look at her text as a whole, after writing, to determine whether larger revisions in meaning need to be made.

However, the willingness to re-read large segments or whole stories as Claire wrote her Jimmy stories was evidence, in itself, of growth towards a sense of comfort with the process of revision. When I heard Claire repeatedly expressing dissatisfaction with a word she disliked in her story, or complaining as she wrote a letter, "I've put too many 'ands' in here." (Transcript: Dec.31, 1985), or "... then it will say 'Christmas' twice, it doesn't sound good" (Transcript: Jan.4, 1986), I saw these as important steps for this child in becoming familiar with the idea of re-seeing her own text. I began to feel that she was becoming more willing to look back at her own texts, as she looks back at the texts of others, with a more critical and discerning eye.

But still, although she was sometimes able to see discrepancies between what she had written and what she meant to write, she was not willing to make extensive revisions. After writing a story for a school assignment she re-read it aloud and then said:

> C: It was, it's this part, um um 'The dragon came up to them and said "I just want to play with you - wanted to play with you". I was gonna put um "I'm sorry to scare you I just wanted to play with you" and I FORGOT!
> M: You could probably erase part of that and fit it in if you really wanted to.
> C: Unh Unh. I'm just gonna erase want-ed and just put want, because it sounds better -not 'wanted to play with you.'
>
> (Transcript: Feb. 24, 1986)

While Claire knew that this was not exactly what she had had in mind, she was not prepared to erase and re-write. She saw that the tense was not quite right as she had written it, but

that she could fix this easily enough. At this stage then she appeared to be willing to settle for minimum revision, even when she could see what needed to be done. Since she had already spent about an hour and a half on this writing and it was due the following day, it is probable that she had given the writing as much time as she had energy and attention for.

One final point regarding Claire's ability to re-see her writing is that I noticed that this ability to be critically aware of her own writing seemed to be easier for her when she could listen to someone else read it. She was always somewhat reluctant to read her own writing, preferring instead to hear it read. Initially I used to wonder whether this showed a lack of ownership of her writing but when it happened repeatedly, even when she was very much engaged in her writing and satisfied with it, I suspected that she liked to be able to focus her whole attention on this critical aspect. Freed from the task of oral reading she listened carefully and often made comments as I, or someone else, read her stories.

Identifying with characters. In writing, as in reading, Claire readily adopted an affinity with her characters, often expressing her delight in the mischievous leprechaun she had created:

> C: That's another pest part, hee hee... and then they had to go look for him is a pest part.
> (Notes: Dec.14, 1986)

However, she was not so caught up in her main character that she saw things only from Jimmy's perspective. She was also able to switch her point of view with surprising ease. As we wrote the first story on the computer I was interested to see that one technique she used quite effectively was to build to a climax with her main character and then cut to a different scene leaving the reader in suspense:

> ... He was frightened. He scrambled out of his home in the ground to save his toys. But he was a bit too late and he got picked up by the bulldozer!
>
> It was teatime and the leprechauns' mother called for them to come. There was an extra seat at the table! There were only nineteen little leprechauns for tea today.
>
> Jimmy and The Big Machine

Claire was aware that her main character was part of a whole story and that she must keep him within the context of the story. She was also obviously aware of the value of using this device to create a sense of anticipation in the reader as she used the technique again in her next two stories:

> Jimmy had only just learned to do doggy paddle so he tried to keep his head above water. Just then a log floated by and Jimmy grabbed onto it.
>
> It was almost bedtime for the little leprechauns and it was getting dark outside. They got their pyjamas on and got into bed. "Oh oh where's Jimmy again?" asked mother.
>
> Jimmy's Big Adventure

Claire's ability to create a character whom she found appealing was undoubtedly strongly influenced by her growing attachment to the attractive Ramona personality, an attachment to be discussed at greater length later in this chapter. But in showing events also from the perspective of

the harrassed leprechaun mother who continually had to go looking for Jimmy, Claire also demonstrated a capacity to actually be able to see those events from a variety of viewpoints. In fact in her final story she gave her sympathies more fully to the mother:

> "This time" said mother "I´m not going to go looking for him." Mother started reading to them.
> Jimmy the Pest

Just as Claire was able to see a situation from both Beezus and Ramona´s point of view as she read, so too in her writing she was able to vary her stance and create a more complex and interesting story. By juggling different perspectives and by keeping the action going on two fronts at the same time, Claire demonstrated her ability to control and orchestrate her writing in increasingly more sophisticated ways.

Support from others. One very important function that I seemed to serve for Claire when I shared in her writing was to act as a sounding board for her ideas and ways of expressing what she wanted to say. Certainly it is my perception that being able to talk about her writing, as she created it, was a valuable means of Claire´s gaining control over it. While she occasionally seemed to need an opinion about a word or phrase, "Now, shall I put ´Peter slept all night´ or just ´Peter got into bed´?" (Transcript: Feb.3, 1986) more often I felt that it was the mere act of saying something aloud that was helpful to her. This was reminiscent of the occasions when she expressed her opinions

about her reading without really seeming to require an answer. I saw this again at a later date when Claire was completing a story she had started at school. She was telling me what she was going to write next.

> C: I'm sorry I frightened you (We both laughed). I just wanted to um to play with you. Or I'm going to put -I'm sorry to frighten you I was just practicing my roaring. Which sounds better? Would you like to play with me? Naw I'll put the first one.
> M: Oh I like the second one.
> C: (inaudible, then decisively) I'm gonna put the first one.
>
> (Notes: Feb. 24, 1986)

Claire barely seemed to notice my interference here but was literally talking to herself and trying to see which of the two sounded better. Verbalizing was perhaps more acceptable, or at least more natural, when she had an obvious audience than if she had been writing alone. But hearing her words spoken aloud was obviously important to her.

Biding her time. Yet another important strategy that Claire used is what I came to refer to as 'biding her time'. Conversations about unrelated or semi-related events, experimentation with some aspect of the word processor, playing with a doll, or doing acrobatics on the floor; such activities were often interspersed with Claire's writing. They seemed to serve the valuable purpose of giving her thinking time, or time to resolve a problem that had cropped up in the writing. As this phenomenon appeared time and again in the data, I began to see the time spent seemingly "off task" as an integral part of her writing. She rarely

gave up altogether when she self-interrupted in this way, but invariably returned to her writing in her own time and was able to continue where she left off. This behaviour is, of course, not unlike the writing behaviour of mature writers such as Donald Murray (1984), and is reminiscent of my own activity now as I alternately write, raid the fridge, write some more, gaze out the window, write again, and do my own acrobatics by stretching in my chair.

Retaining Control

Although Claire valued my encouragement and my presence which made it a collaborative rather than a solitary activity, she relied on me hardly at all for the content of her stories. I have a strong sense that she felt in command of the situation and was not lacking in ideas or ways to express them.

My suggestions ignored. On one occasion when I intruded because of an ambiguity that I genuinely saw in the text, she did not allow me to take over in any way.

M: (typed and said) He carefully climbed onto a bookshelf-
C: So that he didn´t make it fall down and break the china set.(giggled)
M: Um I´m not sure if that´s clear- So that he didn´t -
C: Wouldn´t-
M: Wouldn´t or didn´t?
C: Didn´t
M: Didn´t make it fall
C: (joined in)...it fall, just put fall
M: O.K. That says ´He carefully climbed onto a bookshelf so that he didn´t make it fall.´
C: He wouldn´t make it f-
M: This bit here ´so that he didn´t make it fall´ goes with carefully doesn´t it? It tells you why he

climbed carefully, it doesn't tell you why he climbed onto the bookshelf. It told you why he did it carefully, so I think maybe it needs to go closer to carefully. How could we do that?
(Pause, Claire thought for a while, then changed the subject.

C: Mum on Mary's um on Mary's computer you have to go, like, so lightly like that.
M: Do you? Yeh, just very, very lightly?
C: Yeh at first I went a bit too hard...
M: O.K.
(Claire started playing around, made noises at the tape recorder to see the light flickering.)
M: O.K. so how are we doing? (Re-read the last sentence) Now what?
C: (in a silly voice) I don't know.
(pause)
C: He climbed higher and higher until he could see the kitchen.
M: ...Until he could see the kitchen. Mmmm.
(Transcript: Dec.14, 1985)

I had wondered at the reason for the climb up the bookcase since Claire had not explained this action in the story. However she totally ignored my suggestion, and then after some delaying or distracting activities she carried right on from where she had left off. She did, at a later point, make some revisions to this section, but only when she clearly saw the need for it. Although she continually referred to "our" stories and to what "we" would write, she maintained almost complete control over the content of the writing and depended on me mainly to help with spelling and punctuation. Nevertheless, her use of "our" and "we" said a lot about her view of writing and about the nature of this writing experience.

Conventions. It was of interest when reviewing the transcripts of these collaborative writing events to observe what happened sometimes when questions of the mechanics of

writing arose. It was easy, it seems, to fall back into old patterns and there were times when my focus on spelling and punctuation might well have taken control away from Claire. The following is rather an extreme example of a lengthy period of time devoted to spelling one or two words, but it serves to show how easily we could get "bogged down" in trivialities in a piece of writing. This scenario was a familiar one to both of us, with Claire getting stuck on spellings and me trying to help her - without actually telling her the word!

C: Should we put -um...can we put "I recognize this place" said Jimmy.
M: Mmm hmm O.K. Do you want to type it?
C: Mmm hmm
M: O.K.
C: How do you spell ... whoops-
M: Where did you get a capital from there? Oh it's in 'caps lock' isn't it? ...'r', what comes next?
C: e?
M: Mmm hmm
C: k?
M: Almost...
(Claire wrote 'k')
C: I don't know this word.
M: That's a hard word isn't it?
C: e?
M: Can you think about what it looks like? Have you ever seen it written?... Can you think about what it looks like when you read it?.... well, there's an 'o' comes next..
C: n?
M: Umm there's another letter before the 'n' that we don't always sound. You say reckenize I would say recognize. Can you hear what the other letter is in there?
C: e?
M: Rec-og-nize
C: g
M: Right. O.K. Then comes the -
C: n
M: Mm hmm ...
C: i?
M: Yep

C: - e,s?
M: s,e
C: O.K.
M: There's one letter wrong in there actually. Any idea which one it might be?
C: k?
M: Right! What do you think it should be?
C: C
M: Good. How d'you know?
C: I dunno
M: Is it the way it looks?
C: (inaudible)

(Transcript: Nov.12, 1985)

This particular episode continued in the same vein for about as long again, and there are several similar examples of the same kind of focus on mechanics in this writing session. Because this was a new and different activity for us we were both experimenting in many ways. It took me some time to realize that this was, in fact, a collaborative activity and that I was there to support rather than "teach". This I did naturally when I was typing, which was most of the time, but we lapsed back into the old habits when Claire decided to take a turn at the keyboard. Harste's succinct phrase that "outgrowing one's current self is not easy" (Harste et al, 1984, p.xix) is extra meaningful when I read transcripts like this. Nonetheless, Claire did not appear to find such incidents onerous within this context and seemed able to integrate concerns with spelling and punctuation into her writing just as she also integrated occasional experimentation with the program itself, wondering how and why things worked as they did. Although I may have reinforced her beliefs about the importance of correct spelling, the fact that the concerns were dealt with in

context allowed her to maintain ownership and control over her writing.

A changing attitude

Our collaborative writing was an experience about which we both had positive feelings. My tendency to belabour matters of spelling seemed to create no immediate negative effects (other than, perhaps, to reinforce her existing notions about the intrinsic value of good spelling) and Claire became more engrossed in the project as time went on. Many of the transcripts contain notations about laughter and giggles. On one occasion as we talked about what might happen next in a story Claire said, "I like doing this, it's fun" (Transcript: Nov.26, 1985). As we were getting close to finishing the third story in the series she declared, "This is going to be neat...I'm going to make it into a neat book and then we can draw some pictures for it too." (Transcript: Dec.14, 1985) The humour that wove a continuous thread through the data was an integral part of this writing. The concept of a mischievous leprechaun contained many possibilities for fun, and Claire included this element whenever she could, showing her delight in these sections by much giggling as she re-read them. It was almost as if her delight came with a growing awareness that writing can be for fun and enjoyment and also with a sense of her own ability to produce a worthwhile text in both my eyes and her own.

Claire has occasionally mentioned the possibility of writing more stories since Jimmy and the Big Machine and

Other Stories was produced, but actually did it only once. This was around the time when she began to do cursive writing at school and when many of her comments about writing reflected, again, great concern with form. In January she was despairing because she "only get(s) 7's in writing" but by February when she said one evening that she might write a poem, but then started a story instead, she seemed to have accepted the fact that she will never have copperplate handwriting and was able to poke fun at some of the "rules". As she carefully formed her letters she said with a giggle, "i doesn't have a loo oop... I don't care if i doesn't have a loop or not" (Feb.4,1986). This somewhat irreverent attitude is a far cry from "printing's easy...you just do printing over and over about six times". When she later chuckled to herself "Now slant your um make your words nice and slanted and slant them all the same amount", I could see Claire moving further in the direction of evaluating for herself those aspects of writing that are more and less important. She was less intimidated by the thought of not following the rules, and more critical of traditional notions of what good writing involves. While she was actually using this story writing to practice her new skill she also spent a good deal of time thinking and talking about what she would say and how she would express it. Her confidence showed, as she tried to balance a concern with form alone, against her growing awareness of the greater importance of content and meaning.

Writing For A Variety Of Purposes

Apart from this venture into story writing, Claire did not often write at home. Sometimes she wrote phone messages and on a couple of occasions she made shopping lists for me when she was particularly keen that I should buy certain items. The same vested interest could be seen as her birthday drew close and she wanted to organize her party and she made a list of all the children she would invite. As each child replied Claire then checked her name off on the list. On the same list she wrote games that we could play and presents that she would like. On another occasion, when Claire was off school with a sore throat and feeling a little sorry for herself, she dropped a written message into my lap (Figure 10).

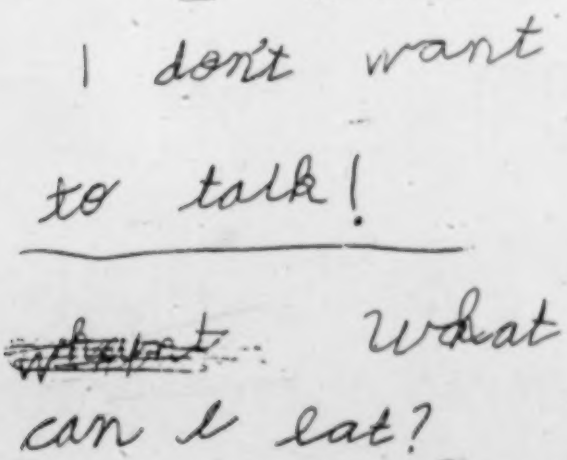


Figure 10: Saying it in writing, Feb. 19, 1986.

At this time also she was looking for things to do and thought first of all that she might make a calendar. She soon dropped this idea though when she realized it involved a lot of tedious drawing of straight lines to make squares. I suggested that she might look in Gifts Of Writing to see whether there was anything she'd like to do, and she subsequently decided to create a message holder for her bedroom door. I helped her with the design of the holder and then left her to create her own messages. Using the suggestions in the book as a model, she made some which were similar and others quite different from the book examples.

Another evening, Claire got very excited about tongue twisters which she had been saying with friends at school. She had trouble remembering "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood", and decided to write it down, "so I can learn it" (Transcript: Jan.20, 1986) A good deal of hilarity followed as I dictated the tongue twister for her and she wrote it. Once it was written, she began to say it over and over without her copy. The experience of writing it (and of repeating it many times during the writing) had given her enough practice to have learned it. Interestingly, after saying "This is hard", she began to look for the reasons why it was so hard to say. In a self-assigned phonics lesson she said "There's (counting) one, two, three, four, five 'w' words and one, two, three, four, five 'c' words". From a real reason for writing, she

found a real reason for teaching herself something about letter sounds.

Although the number of writing episodes were considerably fewer than the number of times that Claire engaged in reading, it is obvious that each time she did decide to write it was for a reason that was real and meaningful to her. She wrote the riddle in order to learn it. She wrote signs for her door partly for something to do, but she was careful in her choice and it had to be something that interested her. Thus, the message holder would mark her territory and would amuse anyone who passed by her door. The shopping lists ensured that she would get her favourite foods, while the note dropped into my lap was an appeal for sympathy and attention, not unlike the message sent by Bissex son, Paul - RUDF (Are you deaf). Like Bissex (1980), I too was reading and none too attentive to Claire's needs at the time. Finally the most extensive piece of functional writing done by Claire, her birthday list, seemed to indicate the relative importance she attached to this piece of writing. It was an ongoing piece of writing ~~which was~~ variously consulted and adjusted in order to accommodate the changing situation.

Making Connections

> "...Knowing is an activity, not a condition or state,...knowledge implies the making of connections." (Knoblauch and Brannon, 1983, p.467)

One of the major aims at the outset of this study was to explore the relationship between reading and writing as it manifested itself in the literacy life of Claire in the home context. While this continued to be a focus of the study, other connections soon began to appear in the data, connections which it seemed equally important to explore. Before describing those connections, which serve in many ways to draw together the other themes discussed, I will further address the question of the connections between reading and writing.

The Reading-Writing Connection

Although I had no doubt that the home context would yield much valuable data on literacy development, I was not quite as confident that I would be able to probe the links between reading and writing. Knowing Claire's dislike of writing and her avoidance of writing situations, I questioned whether there would even be anything to observe in the writing area. Moreover, because of the essentially private nature of the composing process and the difficulty for a young child to articulate her thoughts about the nature of reading and writing, I wondered whether I had not set myself an impossible task. As I attempted to demonstrate in the first half of this chapter, however, the similarity between

the processes used in reading and writing came through quite readily, with the resemblance becoming more marked in relation to the degree of engagement and sense of control achieved in both activities. There are several other areas where it is difficult to separate out reading and writing for individual discussion. This section, then, will focus on those instances in the data where reading and writing seem inextricably bound together so that it is difficult to say where one ends and the other begins.

What you read is what you write. One could most obviously expect to find links between reading and writing in the relationship of what is read to what is written. It was possible to see such connections between Claire's reading and writing over a number of months. The clearest example was in the collaborative writing that we did in November and December of 1985. When Claire decided to write a story, her first idea was to write, in her own words, the story she had read in the puppet show, that of The Three Little Pigs. As she pondered this idea I suggested that perhaps she could think of several ideas and then see which she liked the best. Her second suggestion for a topic was to write a "folktale".

M: O.K. Did you have an idea for a folktale?
C: (laughed) Well I don't really know what a folktale is...
M: Well they're sometimes called fairy tales too, though they don't always have fairies in them, and they're quite short, and they have familiar characters like the beautiful princess and the wicked stepmother and the handsome prince.
C: Oh, like Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty?
M: Yeh that's right. Some of them have been around for

a very long time and often they were just passed on by word of mouth and were only written down later.

C: Well your leprechaun story was a folktale.

M: Hmm I guess it was sort of. And my Mum used to tell it to me, and then I told it to you and then later I wrote it down.

C: I think I'm gonna write a leprechaun story too. (in a definite tone of voice) Yeah that's what I'm gonna write.

M: O.K. good, that's decided. How shall we start?

C: (Began immediately dictating) Once upon a time there was a leprechaun who had many brothers and sisters. He was the youngest (pause).

M: Mmm hmm.

C: He loved to pounce around and play in the fields.

M: He loved to what?

C: Pounce around, no bounce around ... I want to type some now.

(Transcript: Nov. 8, 1985)

Although Claire seemed unsure of the definition of a folktale it was no coincidence, I think, that she mentioned it almost in the same breath as The Three Little Pigs, the puppet show she had performed the night before. Folktales and fairytales have always been a fairly large part of her story diet and many such tales were also read by her teacher in the previous year. Of more interest though was the instant connection she made with my off-the-cuff definition of a folktale, to the story that I had written six months previously. Several months had elapsed since we had read or talked about this story, but immediately she gave it as her own example of a folktale. Almost as quickly, she then made her decision to write a leprechaun story. The connection between the content of my story and the story that she herself would write could not have been more clearly stated. I would further speculate that the fact of having been involved in the story that I wrote made it easier, or perhaps

more natural, for her to use my story as the model for her folktale, rather than any of the others with which she was familiar. Through my enjoyment of my writing she had had a vicarious taste of the pleasure that writing can bring, and some sense of what it means to be a writer may have penetrated her dismissive statement that "writing is boring." Perhaps, too, she felt that if I was able to write something that could be read and enjoyed by others, then she could do it also. As someone to emulate I may have provided an acceptable intermediate step for Claire between a non-writer and a professional author.

It is impossible to say whether the ideas she read about in my story were attractive in themselves or because they were my ideas, and ones with which she was already quite familiar. There is no doubt though that the opening sentences of her first story were remarkably similar to the beginning of my story.

> Claire's story:
> Once there was a leprechaun called Jimmy, who had many brothers and sisters. He was the youngest. He loved to bounce around and play in the fields.
>
> My story:
> Once, not too long ago in the green hills of South-East Ireland there was a young girl named Kathleen. She lived with her ... ten brothers and sisters in a small stone cottage outside the village of Raheen, which means fairy ring or place of the little people....She loved to run and play in the rolling fields...

Once she had started, Claire's story progressed in quite a different way, although she included other elements from my story such as "teatime", and she concluded with a paragraph

about a vegetable garden, which I had also mentioned. As well as being reminiscent of my story, this section also brought to mind the vegetable garden at Mr. McGregor´s house, which was so precariously raided by Peter Rabbit. This Beatrix Potter story is a very old favourite of Claire´s, and one which she still reads from time to time.

It was around the time that she began to write these stories that Claire also began to read the Ramona books. The characters and incidents from the books were such a large part of Claire´s conversation for several months that I wondered whether any of this would filter through into her writing. I did not have to wait long or look very hard for these connections to manifest themselves. One evening, soon after she had finished Ramona the Pest, Claire complained that a Charlie Brown cartoon that she´d been allowed to stay up late to watch when I was out, had not been on after all.

M: Well how come you were so tired this morning then if you didn´t stay up to watch Charlie Brown?
C: (sheepishly) Well, I still stayed up late.
M: Oh I see. I suppose Rachel was on the phone all evening and taking no notice of you.
C: No, she had her face stuck in a book, just like Beezus when she ignores Ramona.
M: Is that what Beezus does?
C: Yeah, and sometimes Ramona is a pest to Beezus.
M: How is she a pest?
C: Well she gets excited sometimes -like at Halloween- and then she´s a nuisance.
M: (laughed) Are you a pest sometimes to Rachel?
C: (giggling) Yeh, I guess so.

About ten minutes after this conversation, Claire suddenly said:

C: "Mum let´s go write on the computer.
M: What, another story?
C: Yeah, about Jimmy the pest.

M: Oh that sounds as if it should be interesting.
C: Mmm, he´s going to knock all the books off the bookshelves and things like that.
(Notes: Nov.26, 1985)

Again, the connection between what she was reading (as well as doing) and what she decided to write, was very obvious. Once she began to write, she appeared to find her own ideas for making Jimmy a ´pest´, so that she got her general idea from her reading but developed it in her own direction. Just as drawing provided the necessary support for Claire´s early writing so too her reading, along with the talk about it, provided support now for her story writing. The difficult task of getting started on a piece of writing was made easier by the ideas that Claire borrowed from her reading since it both limited her choices and helped her get going. Just as in her first story about Jimmy, when she used a few remembered details from my story for a quick beginning and then went on from there, in this instance it was simply the attractive notion of a ´pest´ that provided the motivation to get started. Interestingly, as will be shown later, the details she used for her opening this time were taken from her own life.

When the time came to decide upon a title for her book of stories, Claire again showed her awareness that the writing she had done was closely linked in her mind to the writing that others had done. She thought we should give the book the name of the first story, and then include "and other stories" in the title, "´Cos books that have more than one story sometimes do that" (Notes: Dec.15, 1985). She later

showed me a Joan Aiken book of short stories, The Kingdom Under The Sea And Other Stories, in order to illustrate her point. Thus the title of her book became Jimmy and the Big Machine and Other Stories.

Writing is made to be read. One evening as we were chatting idly about school, I asked Claire whether she had written any stories at school lately. She told me that she had just written a Thanksgiving story called "Tom Turkey" which was started with a sentence from a worksheet and finished in her own words. Immediately she began to tell me the story, which I tape recorded. Her oral version was not so much a "telling" however, as a "reading" without the text. She began to say the story word for word, as well as she could remember it, in what I can only describe as a very reading kind of voice. Had I been just listening, rather than watching, I'm sure that I would have thought she was actually reading the story. When I later compared her actual story with her oral re-telling I found it was almost identical. This small incident told me not only that Claire had obviously spent a good deal of time re-reading her writing as she wrote it, in order to know it so well, but also that she quite definitely saw it as something to be read -even when she did not have the text in front of her.

As Claire's confidence in her ability to produce readable writing grew, she viewed it more and more as something to be read. Even when she was shy about reading her journal on holiday, she nevertheless wanted someone else

to read it. Then, when she was really happy with what she'd written, she wanted to be the reader as well as the writer. After she had written her first Jimmy story, some friends came over to visit. When they heard about her story, they showed genuine interest and asked if they could hear it, and again Claire was delighted to share her writing. She expressed a similar desire to share it further by making it into a book and presenting it to those whom she felt would appreciate it.

A Story Within A Story. Another graphic illustration of Claire's own awareness of the links between her writing and other's writing came about as the result of a homework assignment. A story that she had to write was to be based on a picture (which showed a dragon and two children) and was to include a number of given words. Claire had written the first sentence of her story at school and she was to finish the story at home.

Of particular relevance to the theme of reading-writing connection was the structure of her story. It began with two children walking into an office where they saw an open book. As they touched the book they were drawn into it and became part of the story. All of the action took place in this setting until the children left the book and returned home at the end. (Figure 11).

What intrigued me most about this writing was, of course, the story within a story idea. It seems to me that Claire used this device in order to set the stimulus picture

3. 1. Claire

WORD STARTERS

THE DRAGON'S CAVE

Look at the picture and the five words.
Write a short story.
Use each of the five words in your story.

dragon fire boy girl cave

One day Joanne and Janet were walking in ma Spoffs office when they saw a magic book. They didn't know it was magic so they touched it and it pulled them right inside. They walked

2.

and walked and walked. Just then. Janet said, "My feet hurt and I'm hungery." So they sat down on a sandy bank with some berries. Just then. they heard a big roar. They quickly jumped behind a tree. A dragon came up to them and said, "I just wanted to play with you." "We'll play with you said Joanne. So they went to the dragons cave. They had lots of fun. Soon they were at the end of the book. They said they would visit. They said good-bye and Joanne

3.

And Janet jumped out of the book and lived happily ever after.

The End

Figure 11: A Story Within A Story

within an appropriate setting, one which came out of her own experience with books and so was very meaningful to her. As she well knew, little girls and dragons are not normally seen in each other's company. However, as she also well knew from her story-reading background they can quite easily keep company in a fantasy or fairytale. Just to make quite sure then that the reader knows that this is a true storybook setting, she put the action quite literally within the pages of a book. It is an idea in which she took obvious delight, spending a long time engaged in her writing and illustrations and declaring her own satisfaction in the finished product several times. At the end of the school year, she brought her stories home and, after looking through them again, decided this one was her best. I wondered whether she enjoyed it for the same reason I did, through seeing her writing so deeply embedded in her reading, or was it her reading that was so deeply embedded in her writing?

The Connections of Literacy to Life

Often during the course of the research and especially as I brought the study to a close, I found that I was asking myself variations of the same basic question: In what ways is literacy a meaningful part of Claire's life? This section is an attempt to answer, in part at least, that question. In the process of delineating the myriad connections that were made as Claire made the world of literacy increasingly a part of her own world, four

sub-themes emerged: bringing her life to literacy; bringing literacy to her life; connecting with others in her life; connecting with the world.

Bringing her life to literacy. When Claire began to include elements of her own life in her stories, it was a new step for her. Looking back over her written work of the past three years I see that it was rare for her to write, in fictional form, about things that were close to her. Most of her written work in her first year of school consisted of entries in a daily diary, entries that were concerned with the events of her life told in straightforward diary prose, the expressive writing referred to by Britton (1970). That Claire already had a well-developed sense of story (Applebee, 1977) is evident from the occasional stories that she wrote, although her few attempts at story writing were usually retellings of other stories that she had heard. Story writing in her second and third years of school comprised a small number of short, fairly standard stories that were generally assigned through a given title or story starter. I could find few personal connections with her own life in these stories.

When Claire suggested that we write stories together, her initial starting point was an idea gleaned from my own writing of some months previously. But while the impetus for her third story was her reading of Ramona The Pest, many of her ideas came from her own life.

Jimmy the pest

It was a hot summer day. It was too hot for Jimmy to go outside. He nagged his Mom to make popsicles, and she said "Later!" Half an hour later he asked again, but it was Saturday and that meant it was cleaning up day. Jimmy decided to dust the bookshelves. Oh-oh all of a sudden there was a loud crash as all the books came falling down. One of the books broke the china tea set. "JIMMY go to your room!" shouted his mother.

Despite the fact that this was written in December, the initial scenario of a Summer's day when it was too hot to go outside was familiar, as was the situation of a child nagging for popsicles and the mother saying "Later!" The notion of Saturday as cleaning up day was yet another recognizable aspect of life in the Sanders' household in the past year or so that Mom had been back at University. Sure enough, Jimmy even did Claire's usual job, that of dusting the bookshelves. At this point fact and fiction became more distinguishable since we have no china teaset near a bookshelf. Undoubtedly however, broken china and angry mothers are also within the realm of Claire's experience.

The subsequent events in the story involved a close encounter with some humans and their cat, and again there were similarities both with Claire's reading and with my own leprechaun story, particularly in the ending which was a reversal of the ending to my story: Jimmy related his adventures in the human's house but no-one really believed him, just as no-one had really believed Kathleen's tale, in my story, about seeing a leprechaun.

It was not my intention to analyze this story for hidden meanings but rather to show that there is evidence that

Claire is beginning to see, in events from her own life, the stuff of fiction. The hints are there but as yet unnamed and perhaps even unrecognized by Claire. She has begun to realize that you don't have to resort to outrageous or exaggerated adventures to make a story interesting and readable. Perhaps she sees also that there are many relevant ideas from her own life that can provide an impetus to write. She is learning, in fact, that ordinary happenings from her own life are fine material for story writing. It is quite possible, especially since aspects of Ramona and her adventures were also incorporated into this story, that she was able to recognize the value of ordinary family life to a writer, as a result of a growing admiration for the Ramona books. It may even be that books are now so much a part of her life that it is difficult to separate the two. Her experiences with books have become a part of her life experiences.

Although this notion of bringing her own life to the writing strand of literacy is one that is just beginning to be part of Claire's consciousness, it appears to be already firmly embedded in the reading strand of her literacy. While it is not always easy to distinguish between the give and take that occurs between literacy and life, the process of bringing her own life to books has been most clearly seen in shared book reading sessions. Claire has always been an active participant in the reading process, asking questions and commenting on the stories, often at length. This

participation continued throughout the study as I observed Claire bringing memories of other stories and of events from her life to new stories. On one occasion, for instance, when I read her a version of The Ugly Duckling she commented during the opening paragraphs:

> C: I can just see that hay all piled up like it was in Nadia's story when she was riding in the wagon and like it was in "The Hayloft" (A Walter de la Mare poem she had learned at school)... I'd love to go up high and just jump off into them.

Later on in the story she said:

> C: Oh I didn't like that part where it went "bang! bang!" and the water was all red. Why were they shooting the geese?
> M: Well, they were hunters and they were allowed to shoot the ducks and geese in the hunting season.
> C: Well I hope they only shot as much as they needed -like the Indians. They only killed buffalo as they needed them because they respected the land, but then when the white man came they just killed them all off.
>
> (Notes: July 12, 1985)

These latter connections were made as a result of Claire's recent social studies experiences at school, when her class had had Indian and Metis visitors who talked about their history and culture. Claire thus interpreted new experiences in the light of former knowledge, often in an almost casual way. In the incident mentioned in the introductory chapter when she asked about the book title Why Children Fail, her response to my explanation was to relate it to the topic of reading disability that we had discussed a couple of days previously. On another occasion, she pointed to the similarity of themes between the Hilaire Belloc poem Matilda and the story of The Boy Who Cried Wolf (Jan. 20 1986), while

the concept of parents who were cruel to their children was seen by Claire to be a common theme in two other books with which she was familiar (Jan. 21, 1986). On hearing the story Babes in the Wood, which she had not heard for several years, she declared it to be similar to Snow White and also to Hansel and Gretel. As Claire began to read greater numbers of books independently, I also found that she began to compare themes and characters across books, seeing similarities for instance between the Ramona books and Superfudge. Claire thus seems to be actively involved in integrating all of her past experiences, with both books and life, into her current reading experiences.

Bringing literacy to her life.

A. "Passionate attention" to Ramona and her life I consider it fortunate that I chose to do this study at the time when Claire became so enamoured with the Ramona books. The phrase "passionate attention" borrowed by McGuire (1973) from W.H.Auden, precisely describes the effect that this series of books had on Claire. For several months she was so completely captivated by the lives of the characters in the books, and particularly by the lively, imaginative Ramona that they became almost part of our own family.. The intensity of her attachment to this particular series allowed me to gain some important insights into the way in which Claire connects with books.

She read Ramona the Pest in mid November ~~1985~~ at my suggestion, when I remembered how much her sisters had

enjoyed this series. It was not long before I realized that I had hit on the right selection. As soon as she had finished this book she went straight on to others in the series and after finishing all seven she began to re-read each of them. Claire began almost immediately to talk about Ramona, telling us at the supper table of Ramona's exploits and repeating some of the funnier incidents over and over again.

One day she told each of us in turn about Ramona's misunderstanding of the words "dawn's early light" from The Star-Spangled Banner. Ramona, she informed us, thought it was "dawnzer lee light", and so one day she asked her mother to turn on the dawnzer. The sharing of this incident, though not a new story to any of us, caused much hilarity and reminiscences of other amusing episodes, between the three girls. The data is full of similar re-tellings of funny incidents from the stories, as well as occasional suggestions that we should emulate some aspects of life in the Quimby household.

C: Do you know what Ramona did? She made a crown of burrs and it got stuck in her hair. Her Dad had to cut all her hair off.
M: Really?
C: Yeh, and once she wiped her hands on the cat, and she cut her hair so that she'd be bald like her Uncle! (laughed)
M: Wow it sounds like Ramona really gets into some scrapes.
C: Yeah she's so funny.

Later, Claire wandered over to Es who was reading the newspaper and said:

C: I know, we can carve our pumpkin next Halloween with

ears and eyebrows. That's how Ramona did hers, Look! (She showed him the picture in the book)
(Notes: Nov.30, 1985)

Shortly after this series of conversations an argument broke out because Rachel had absconded with Claire's current Ramona book, to re-read it in the comfort of her room. Catherine also began to read the books again at this time, and this precipitated still further reminiscences and laughter about events in the books. Not only did Claire's enthusiasm for Ramona precipitate a resurgence of interest in the books from Rachel and Catherine but I noticed that they became more interested generally in what Claire was reading and began to recommend books to her more often.

Beyond the humour, which was obviously a very powerful drawing card for Claire, she also related to the books in many more serious ways. She began, for instance, to look at the various dimensions of Ramona's life and to make connections and comparisons with her own. One of the first questions she asked as she was reading Ramona the Pest was:

C: Mum what does 'liberated' mean? (She had difficuty pronouncing the word.)
M: It means 'freed'. How does it come up in the book?
C: Well Ramona's Mum is going to get a job and Beezus tells her she'll be liberated. Does that mean, like freed from being in the house?
M: Yes, and also that she'll have money of her own, that she'll have more independence.
C: Are you going to get a job soon Mum?
M: Yes I hope so, when I've finished at University.
(Notes: Nov.23, 1985)

From this question about word meaning, Claire instantly made the connection with her own family situation. Many similar connections were made with her own family life. She

checked out with her sister Ramona's experience of sleeping on a mat in kindergarten and was disappointed when Catherine told her that she hadn't done that in kindergarten. When Ramona was delighted to be a bridesmaid at her Aunt's wedding, we had several conversations about Claire's chances of also having that experience. The fact of Ramona's Aunt being a teacher also led Claire to discuss with me the pros and cons of teaching various grade levels.

By the time two more months had gone by and Claire had re-read all of the Ramona books at least twice, she began to see what attracted her to the books.

> C: Mom this book is a lot like our family because Dad gets mad when the kids are shouting and he's trying to work, and Ramona hates cleaning her room -and so do I, and so do Rachel and Catherine. And then Picky-picky is always wanting to go out like Sparky does and then wants to come in again straight away.
>
> (Notes: Jan.31, 1986)

The next day she said even more definitely:

> C: I know why I like the Ramona books, it's because Ramona's like me.
>
> (Notes: Feb.1, 1986)

Regardless of whether Ramona is in fact like Claire, the important thing is Claire's perception that they are alike, her sense of identification with an attractive character. A few weeks later, after re-reading a chapter of Ramona Quimby Age 8 she said with a satisfied smile:

> C: I like Ramona
> M: I think Ramona is your friend
> C: (With a grin, but quite seriously) Yes, she's my bosom friend.
>
> (Notes: Mar.13, 1986)

Whether Ramona is seen by Claire to be her very self or a bosom friend- a kindred spirit- there is no doubt that the "passionate attention" Claire devotes to Ramona is a direct result of the connectedness that she feels with this fictional character. Moreover, after a prolonged exposure to the books she is metacognitively aware of the reasons for her response. She sees the common patterns in their lives, and even where those patterns differ she reflects on the differences and wonders how her own life would be affected by the circumstances of Ramona's life.

> C: What if you lost your job Dad? What would you do?
> E: I don't know. (laughed) Maybe Mum would get a job.
> C: Yeh like Ramona's family, the Quimbeys.
> E: Is that what they did?
> C: Yes. Their Dad lost his job and they didn't have any money for groceries or anything so Ramona's Mum had to get a a full-time job.
> E: Oh, and how did that work out?
> C: Well Ramona didn't like it very much 'cos her Dad was miserable and smoked too much, and they didn't have much fun any more. Let's go skiing or skating this afternoon...
>
> (Notes: Nov.30 1985)

Claire was clearly empathising with Ramona and was looking at Ramona's family in relationship to her own family. Mr. Quimbey's job loss did have a marked effect on the family, and in particular on Ramona's life and on her relationship with her father. Claire mentioned this incident on at least three occasions, so this aspect of the story obviously affected her deeply. The thought of a family losing its source of income had perhaps not even occurred to her before, but the insight she gained into this experience, through Ramona, certainly caused her to give it very serious

consideration. Once she became aware that the possibility existed, she was anxious to test out the likelihood of it happening in her own family, and then was able to explore the ramifications of this kind of social dilemma within the non-threatening context of the Ramona story, as she did on a number of occasions. Drawn into the books by the humour and characterization, Claire began to examine the complexity of human relationships that existed in the books and to compare and contrast them with those that existed in her own world.

B. From humour to handicaps. Claire used other stories also to explore ideas and concepts which might ordinarily have remained untouched. One of the "Little Girl" stories that I wrote at the beginning of the study mentioned a physically handicapped child who was my friend at elementary school. Several weeks after Claire had read this story she said one evening:

C: You know that girl in the wheelchair - I don't remember her name.
M: You mean the one in my story, Sara Crawford?
C: Yes. Well did you ever see her again?
M: No I haven't see her for years, ever since I left that school.
C: Would she ever get better or would she always be handicapped?
M: No, she would always be handicapped. I think it was something that happened to her when she was born and there's no cure for it.
C: Well why was she in a wheelchair if she just couldn't talk very well?
M: It wasn't only that she couldn't talk. She couldn't walk either, or use her hands very well. She couldn't even hold her head up properly
C: How did she learn then?
M: Well if I remember correctly, I think she was quite intelligent. She could think alright but she just couldn't make her body do what she wanted it to.

C: She wouldn´t ever get married would she?
M: No, I don´t think so.
C: Will Jill ever get married? (A mentally handicapped person we know)
M: No I don´t think she will either.
C: But she can do things like washing clothes and stuff.
M: Yes but she would find it hard to look after a husband and children. In many ways she still thinks and acts like a girl of 8 or 9.
C: They´re sort of the same (Sara Crawford and Jill) but different too. One can think well but she can´t do very much and the other one can do lots of things but she can´t think very well...
(Notes: July 8, 1985)

In this instance my story was used by Claire to initiate discussion about the concept of handicaps - a word that she herself used. She wanted first of all to understand the nature of the handicap, and she then made the connection with someone else we know who is handicapped, although mentally rather than physically. After talking about it a little further she was then able to abstract the essential features of both kinds of handicap: "One can think well but she can´t do very much and the other can do lots of things but she can´t think very well". Making these kinds of connections perhaps also allows her to compare and contrast with her own life, as she did with Ramona, and in this instance allowed her to to see what it is to be whole and able.

On another occasion, we also discussed why my handicapped friend might have been the only one who understood how I felt when, as a five year old, the teacher had unwittingly made me the object of unwanted attention by putting me in the doll´s cradle on several occasions. Claire concluded that perhaps my friend knew how I felt because "She

was in that wheelchair and she was hurt too... and people were looking at her and stuff" (Notes: June 24, 1985). The insight into others' feelings as shown by Claire, in these self-initiated discussions, was surprising to me for two reasons. I felt first of all that her reflective comments about my feelings in the story were unusual in one who was still supposedly in the stage of egocentrism described by Piaget (1955). Moreover, she had gone beyond her own feelings of empathy to explore possible reasons for the empathy felt by another in the story. Not only did Claire understand how I felt, but by seeing the action through the eyes of the handicapped girl she thought that she knew why this girl too would understand. When she summarised my story by saying "They didn't have much respect for you", it was perhaps the most perceptive comment I had received about this story.

Connecting with others in her life. It is perhaps already evident from the discussion in the 'Taking Control' section of this chapter that Claire is able to assume greater control over her reading and writing largely as a result of these activities being embedded in socially satisfying situations. It is in connecting with others that she finds the greatest pleasure in literacy and conversely it is sometimes through literacy that she further develops those connections. When reading and writing activities are ends in themselves, as for example when she has to complete worksheets which are mere mechanical exercises, she is not

only bored and resistant but she is confused about the nature of reading and writing. When literacy can be used for real purposes: to read or tell a story, to make others laugh, to thank someone for a gift, to learn more about her own family, to learn more about herself, to make sense of the workings of the world, it is no longer a chore but a worthwhile human activity.

Since many instances of both kinds of activities have been described, as well as the effects that those activities produced, I will emphasise this point with one example only. It is a small incident that occurred one evening very early in the study, when I was becoming more interested, in a professional way, in my daughter's literacy growth. It was almost bedtime and I had suggested several times to Claire that it was time for her bath. Although she was not engaged in any particular activity, she was procrastinating and showing few signs of heading for the bathroom. She just kept saying that she didn't want a bath. Then, as I was about to tell her "for the last time", some impulse made me instead pick up a pencil and sheet of paper that were lying on the table, and write the message down. The exchange in Figure 12 then took place.

The first observation to be made is that this was an exchange that Claire thoroughly enjoyed. True it served the purpose of putting off bathtime for a little longer, but true also that she took her bath smiling and uncomplaining. She quickly picked up the light bantering tone that is often a

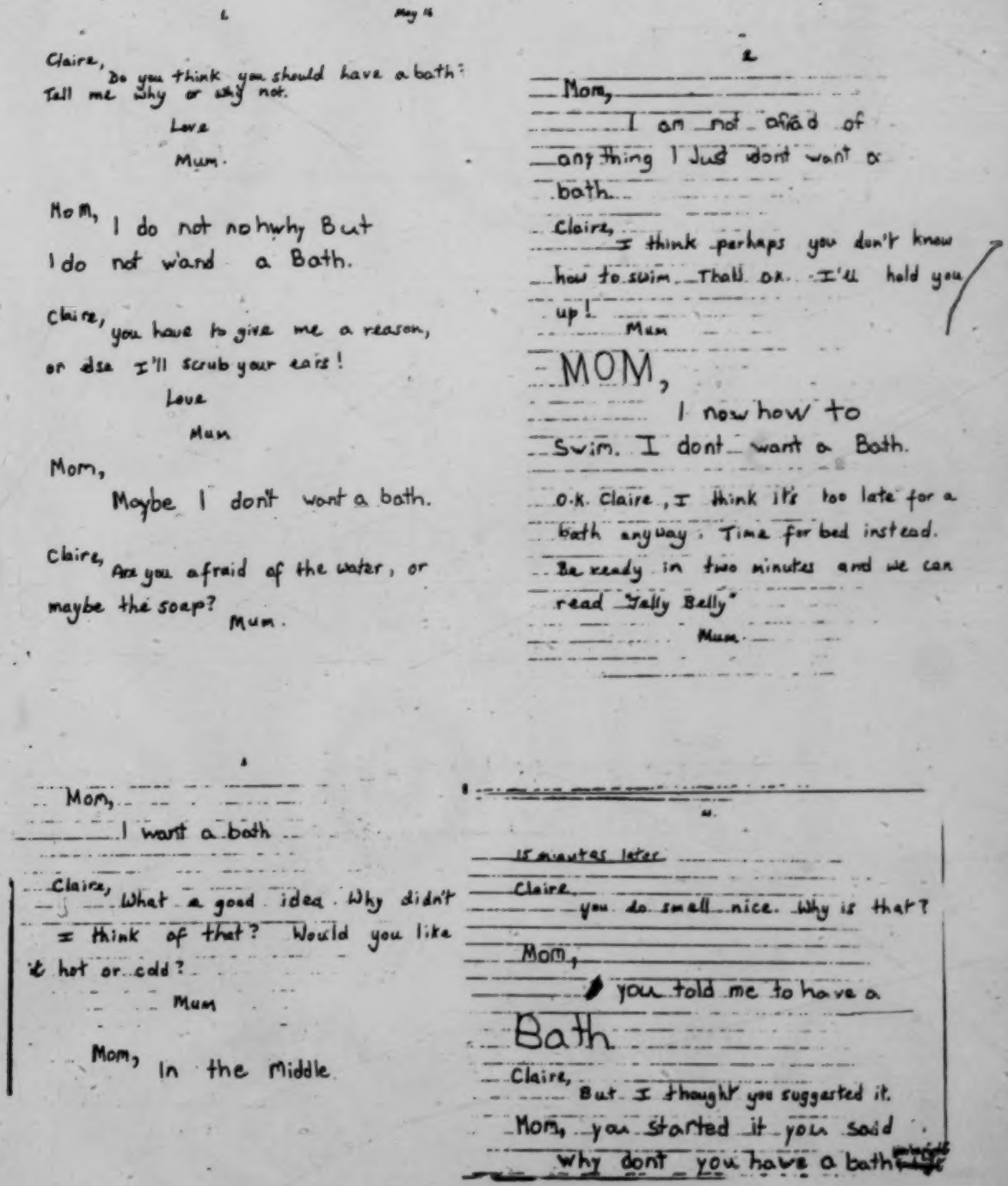

Claire, Do you think you should have a bath? Tell me why or why not.
Love
Mum.
Mom, I do not no why But I do not want a Bath.
Claire, you have to give me a reason, or else I'll scrub your ears!
Love
Mum
Mom, Maybe I don't want a bath.
Claire, Are you afraid of the water, or maybe the soap?
Mum.
Mom, I am not afraid of anything I just dont want a bath.
Claire, I think perhaps you don't know how to swim. That ok. I'll hold you up!
Mum
MOM, I now how to Swim. I dont want a Bath.
O.K. Claire, I think it's too late for a bath anyway. Time for bed instead. Be ready in two minutes and we can read "Jelly Belly"
Mum
Mom, I want a bath
Claire, What a good idea. Why didn't I think of that? Would you like it hot or cold?
Mum
Mom, In the Middle
15 minutes later
Claire, you do smell nice. Why is that?
Mom, you told me to have a Bath
Claire, But I thought you suggested it.
Mom, you started it you said why dont you have a bath

Figure 12: I Don't Want A Bath

part of family conversation and giggled continually, both as she wrote and as she waited to read my messages. She asked for one or two spellings as she wrote but mostly she just wrote her replies as quickly as she could. Unable, as in spoken dialogue, to show expression other than through her laughter, she managed nevertheless to emphasise one or two points through the use of extra large letters e.g. MOM and BATH. When she had finished her bath, she said "That was fun let's do it again", and so we wrote a few more lines.

It should also be emphasised that this piece of informal writing was done at a time when Claire was regularly stating her dislike of writing. Of course, as previous discussion has shown, she seemed not at all sure at this stage about what writing really was, lumping together printing, fill in the blanks exercises, and story writing under the same label. While there is no question that this exchange was indeed writing, Claire seemed not to treat it as such. Because the focus was very much on what was being said, as well as on the humour and understatement of the messages, she was eager to respond and less concerned with form. More than just writing then, this brief writing interlude was a sharing of time, of humour, of playfulness. It was also the strengthening of a parent-child bond; the enhancement of a relationship made stronger through the use of written language (D. Dillon, personal communication, May. 23, 1985).

It is perhaps evident that Claire uses her reading too as a way of enhancing her relationships with others. On a

number of occasions during family conversations I became aware of the extent to which talk about books was integrated with discussion about all kinds of other things. At the supper table, the topics of conversation might run the gamut from school tests to hairstyles to comments on books being read. Claire always holds her own in such conversations and initiates many of the discussions herself. One evening, Claire, Rachel and I sat together alternately reading and chatting idly. Rachel and Claire had just been comparing experiences with difficult friends, and then began commenting about the characters in the Ramona books.

Claire turned to the back page of the book and nudged me to show she was reading the last page. I laughed:

M: Haven't you done that yet? (to Rachel) She hasn't turned to the back page and read the last sentence.
R: Oh, yeah!
M: Do you do it too?
R: Well it depends. If it's a really boring book I usually just skip a chapter and go on to the next chapter. But I usually manage to resist actually.
C: I can't wait...
R: I do that in my Adrian Mole books - when I first read them. But it doesn't do much because like there's not a real plot in Adrian Mole. It's a series of events.
C: It says "Tomorrow we'll begin all over again."
M: Is that the last sentence?
C: Yeh.

(Transcript: Jan. 31, 1986)

A few minutes later as she read another part of her Ramona book where Ramona was being particularly naive about appropriate classroom procedures, Claire said aloud:

C: Oh Ramona!
R: That's what I always say. I always feel embarassed for her.
C: (again) Oh Ramona Quimbey aged 8!

Conversations of this kind occurred quite frequently in the family context and allowed for a fairly detailed exploration of some aspects of reading styles and of particular books and themes. The books became a common bond between children and between parents and children. While I saw no evidence of the detailed nature of this exploration carrying over into other situations, I certainly saw and heard a number of instances of Claire using books to interact socially with others. Again Ramona was responsible for most of this talk, with Claire urging friends to read the books, or asking whether specific books had been read. Although such discussions were outnumbered by others about Cabbage Patch Kids and My Little Pony, I felt that "books and reading" was an accepted topic of discussion in Claire's peer group and that this talk about books was one more way of relating to others and of strengthening group ties. At the same time, of course, it also helped to strengthen their ties with books.

Connecting with the world. I have used this rather global term of connecting with the world to describe a stance increasingly taken by Claire as she grew in confidence and awareness of her own literacy. This stance includes elements of critical reading of books, some of which were previously described, as well as instances of a discerning attitude towards other print in her environment. It includes also an attitude towards events of the world, a desire to read the

meaning of these events in the same way as she reads the meaning in her books.

A. Beyond Ramona. Claire began to look critically not only at the Ramona books but at other books she read, particularly those she read more than once. The Shel Silverstein books of poetry were very popular for several weeks in December and January. At first Claire simply enjoyed the humour, rhythm and rhyme of the poems but then she began to ask for explanations and to make more comments generally as we read them together. After reading Melinda Mae, a poem about a girl who ate a whale, Claire looked at the picture of a skinny, wizened old woman and said, questioning the relevance of the picture, "She'd have to be fat though (if she'd eaten that much)" (Jan. 20, 1986). As we read Hungry Mungry she responded, "He can't eat the sun... And anyway how could he live... eat the sun?" To one of her other favourites Sick, a litany of a child's numerous ailments which prevent her from going to school, she made the observation "It starts at her skin and goes right to her heart." Her growing familiarity with the poems allowed her to focus on particular aspects that perhaps she hadn't noticed before, or to challenge some of the more outrageous ideas presented.

On another occasion, she brought home from school a version of Jack and the Beanstalk that she had said was very good. She asked me to read it to her and as I did so I noticed how very critical she was of this much admired book.

She declared several of the pictures inadequate because of incorrect colours or poor representation, "That doesn't look like a castle, and anyway it's too small for a giant." (Jan. 25, 1986) She also took exception to the failure of the text to maintain its veracity at times. When the text read "She lived all alone..." Claire said "How could she live all alone if she lives with her son, Jack?" Again when the text read, "He'd had nothing to eat since yesterday's dinner", Claire said indignantly, "But he didn't have any dinner yesterday, 'cos he got sent to bed without it." Having passed judgement on many individual aspects of the story she then made a general statement about the story as a whole:

> C: Jack was too greedy. He kept going back for more and wasn't satisfied with what he already had. I don't think it was fair that he stole all the giant's things and then the giant got killed, because he didn't do anything to Jack.
> (Notes: Jan. 25, 1986)

This is a story that Claire has heard many times over the years. Most recently it had been read by her teacher at school and she had been keen to bring it home to re-read again. This apparently gave her the opportunity to say what she really thought about it. She felt confident in criticising a centuries old fairy tale with its supposed message of right and wrong, good and evil. Instead of accepting the usual moral of the bad giant getting his just desserts she saw things in a very different light. A careful attention to the text along with her own sense of justice moved her to declare the whole situation immoral.

Around this time also, I noticed on several occasions that Claire began to read the T.V. advertisements critically too. One evening she said:

C: That's a dumb advertisement!
M: Which one?
C: The one about the diapers that say they keep a baby dry all night. I mean (spreading her hands in a questioning gesture) what are diapers for anyway? They're not to keep babies dry, they're to keep the wet from spreading onto the bed. How can they keep babies dry?

(Notes: Feb. 13, 1986)

A short discussion led her to conclude "They're not really telling the truth then."

Environmental print also came in for some criticism. One Sunday afternoon when we'd gone to the local Dairy Queen after our swim, Claire said:

C: Look at that, they say "Hamburgers 99¢. It's silly. Why don't they say a dollar, it's only a cent more.
M: Yes but 99¢ sounds less than $1. They do it to make people think they're paying less than they are.
C: Hmm that's dumb. Do people really believe it?
M: Maybe some do.

(Feb. 16, 1986)

These spontaneous reactions to print that didn't make good sense or that stretched her credibility, show Claire's increasing awareness of the power of print to persuade and influence. Claire it seems will not be easily swayed or wooed into the easy consumption of print produced by others. Though yet an apprentice in literacy she shows a willingness to apply her own standards of truth and sensibility to the print in her world. She is indeed reading her world at the same time as she is reading the word (Freire, 1983).

B. Reading the world. My final description is of an incident which served to draw the study to a conclusion that was both enlightening and sobering. It concerns neither reading nor writing, if I am to use those terms in the narrowest sense, and yet it had everything to do with literacy as I have come to understand it. It concerns again a reading of the world through the written word.

Towards the end of March 1986, Rachel was involved in a school production of The Diary Of Anne Frank. Her friend was playing the leading role and there had been much excitement and general discussion about the play in the weeks before it was put on for parents. Naturally we planned to see it, and in spite of some hesitation on my part because of the subject matter, Claire was anxious to see it too. So we all went along. The play was very well performed and enjoyed by all of us. Claire asked a few questions about it as we drove home that evening and we talked about it a little, mostly putting the play in its historical context. A few days later, Claire brought up the subject again and we discussed it at some length. She began by checking her perception that of the eight people who had lived together in the secret room for two years, only Anne's father had survived.

Then Claire asked many probing questions as she attempted to make sense of this senseless act of history. How did Mr. Frank manage to survive? How did they know who was Jewish and who wasn't? Why didn't they like the Jews? What did they do wrong anyway? Did they take any other people away as

well? Why did they wear the yellow stars? Why didn't they just take them off? Why didn't they go somewhere else when the soldiers started to round them up? Why didn't someone help them, like the Mayor? Why didn't they fight to save themselves? How long did it all go on for? (Mar.26 1986)

We talked for about half an hour in all and explored many facets of the topic. We talked about prejudice, bigotry and racism and discussed racial stereotypes. We looked at the history of the war a little, and Claire remembered the air raid shelter in her Grandparent's backyard in London and the story of her Dad spending most nights for the first year of his life there. I also tried to stress some of the positive aspects of people's behaviour at a difficult time by describing people who had tried to help in various ways. Finally Claire returned to the play to ask about Anne's friend Jopie, who was mentioned in the play as having been taken away. Claire said, reflectively, that Anne must have been very sad when she knew that her friend had gone.

Claire seemed to be able to comprehend most easily the tragic death of the people with whom she had had close contact through the experience of the play, rather than the enormity of the catastrophe as a whole. It was through her empathy with a lively, vivacious girl (not unlike the Ramona character, I thought) and her best friend, that Claire gained a personal understanding of a horrifying event in recent history. She returned to the topic again a week later in order to go over some old ground and to explore new areas.

Her concerns this time were more geographic in nature, and as we looked at a map of Europe she showed great interest in the course of the war and in the changing face of Europe. Her interest extended also to questions about whether there had been a war in Canada, with Claire making her own social studies inspired references to the rights of Native peoples.

Initially, I felt a certain apprehension about discussing events of this nature with a child so young, but I took my lead from her, feeling that to skirt the issue would have been dishonest and even harmful. Her attitude was one of thoughtful concern and she was forthright and open in her questions, seeking out exactly the pieces of information that she herself wanted. Once she was satisfied with her understanding of events she brought the conversation to a close and went off to see what her sister was doing.

In some very deep and essential way, I feel that these discussions have much to do with Claire's literacy growth. She appeared to "read" this play, a play adapted from literature, with the same interest, empathy and insight as I have observed her reading many of her books, and as she reads events and situations in her own and other's lives. She brought her own background knowledge (in this case a rather limited knowledge of war and its effects) to her reading, and through her own questions and probing she actively constructed a backdrop for the drama she had seen. Seemingly unable, like most of us, to comprehend the magnitude of the Holocaust, she found her deepest meaning at the simple, but human, level of the shattered friendship of two young girls.

Discussion And Related Literature

The conclusion to Chapter IV stated that at the beginning of the study I believed that Claire saw herself as a reader but she was not at all sure that she was also a writer. Hence I considered that her literacy development had been somewhat uneven up to that point. Growth in Claire's reading and writing was clearly evident in the year I observed her literacy development. One of the major ways in which this growth was apparent was through the amount of control that she was able to maintain or gain in her reading and writing activities. It was equally apparent in the many connections that she made between literacy and her own life. At this point I will draw these themes together in a summary of Claire's literacy growth and will relate my findings to pertinent research and theory in the field.

Reading-Writing Relationship

As stated in Chapter II, the commonalities of the processes used in reading and writing are being given greater emphasis since literacy has come to be recognized as another aspect of language development. Tierney and Pearson, whose article "Toward a composing model of reading" (1983) will be used as the basis for discussion in this section, argue that readers like writers compose meaning, and they describe "some aspects of the composing process held in parallel by reading and writing" (p.569). These researchers take the view that just as writers plan their writing, write drafts, assume a

stance towards the reader, revise their work, and monitor the whole process, so too readers can go through analogous patterns in their reading. Similar views have been expressed by Harste et al (1984), Smith, (1983), and Squire (1983).

For Claire many of these processes, which were initially described in relation to writing by Murray (1968), occur most readily in her reading. This is the area where Claire has the greatest control and where literacy is most closely connected with her life. She likes to plan what she will read and has strong feelings and impressions about the things she will read. Only when the desire to write for her own purposes began to find a firmer place in her life, did the incentive to plan her writing also become evident, though still not as obviously so as in her reading. Recently, Murray (1984), suggested that this planning in writing -what he terms rehearsal- is the most important part of the process for him. For a mature and confident writer this may be so, but for inexperienced writers such as Claire other aspects of the process seem, perhaps, to have greater importance.

The process of drafting was one of the most interesting to observe in Claire's reading. It is defined by Tierney and Pearson as "the refinement of meaning which occurs as readers and writers deal directly with the print on the page" (p. 571). Claire was often satisfied with an approximation of meaning on a first reading but went back for second, third and further drafts, thus gradually refining her meaning. This strategy of re-reading is related to the process of

revision, a concept currently very much in evidence in classrooms where "writing process" programs are in practice. For Claire, the habit of re-reading books, sometimes several times, is one that was established in her early years in a shared reading context. She now not only re-reads for a number of different reasons, but is herself metacognitively aware of her reasons for any particular re-reading. The purposes, in Claire's case, come from herself since her reading at home is largely recreational and self-directed. It is she who controls what she will read and for what reasons. This element of choice is, as mentioned previously, considered to be basic to the growth of enthusiastic and continuing readers (Chambers, 1973; Graves, 1985; Meek, 1982; Tucker, 1981). As suggested earlier, the whole revision process in reading leads Claire to see her books in new and different ways, a point which will be discussed further at the end of this chapter. I believe that revision is presently considerably more important to Claire's composition of meaning in reading than to her composition of meaning in writing.

In writing, Claire's attitude at the beginning of the study seemed to be "first draft, only draft". She wanted merely to spend the minimum time possible on her assigned writing, in order to complete what were basically external requirements. Perhaps, as Dyson (1984) says, "If we take away the intending person, writing becomes a way of giving rather than taking control" (p. 623). As we wrote together

on the computer, writing initiated by Claire, she became more open to re-reading her writing and to making minor changes when she saw the need. This is the type of revision that Calkins (1986) refers to as corrections, hypothesising that at this age children tend to re-read their writing mainly to correct rather than to discover new meanings. Indeed, Bissex (1980) observed that when her son was involved in writing for his own purposes at home it was not until his tenth year that revision and editing became a part of his processes, .

Perhaps a great deal depends on the extent to which children experience the opportunity to revise and to share their writing in everyday classroom situations and on the development of their view of writing as an on-going meaning making process. Also, it may well be that when Claire writes, her own meaning is clearer in earlier drafts than in her reading so that she has less need to revise, in terms of meaning-making. Reading one's own words objectively takes much greater distance and empathy than reading the words of others. There appeared to be support for the third grade plateau phenomenon of which Calkins (1983, 1986) speaks, . whereby children acquire a certain level of competence and then sit at this level. However, in light of Piagetian views of children as active learners and Kelly's (1955) related notions of the child as inquiring scientist I question whether this is not simply a learned plateau, similar to the "learned vulnerability" discussed by Harste et al (1984), a situational effect rather than a developmental stage.

When Tierney and Pearson talk about the alignment aspect of the composing process, they refer both to the stances that readers and writers adopt and to the roles in which they "immerse themselves as they proceed with the topic" (p.572). Tierney and Pearson hypothesize that "...adopting an alignment is akin to achieving a foothold from which meaning can be more readily negotiated" (P.573). They quote several studies which point to the value of encouraging readers to adopt particular alignments as they read and to other studies which found that children who are able to visualize events (a kind of alignment) in a story, tend to show improved comprehension. This brings to mind Claire's tendency to act out some of the scenes from the Ramona and Henry Huggins books. She also demonstrated an ability to look at situations in books from a number of different viewpoints rather than taking the most obvious one. Such an ability which is also clearly shown in the back and forth movement between two scenes in her leprechaun story writing, might be attributed to the growing out from the centredeness of self described by Piaget (1955), although others (Donaldson, 1978; Harste et al, 1984), have questioned this notion of the inherent egocentricity of the young child. Tierney and Pearson conclude from their own observations that "identification with characters and immersion in a story... account for much of the vibrancy, sense of control and fulfillment experienced during reading and writing" (p.38). These characteristics were clearly evident in much of

Claire's reading and, on some occasions, in her writing. When she writes about things that she knows about, she can be empathic because she understands all parts and roles in that situation.

The final aspect of the composing process, common to both reading and writing in Tierney and Pearson's view, is that of monitoring - the ability of readers and writers to stand back from their texts and evaluate what they have drafted. Carl Bereiter (1982) refers to this as a "central executive function" which when working effectively enables a reader or writer to switch attention from one activity to another and back again, and to ensure that all aspects of the process are operating to his or her satisfaction. Flower and Hayes (1980), in their work with inexperienced adult writers, found that these writers often had difficulty in making these shifts from writing to reading and back to writing and then re-reading. Although Claire appeared to re-read fairly consistently as she wrote, thereby ensuring that her written product matched her intentions, in many instances the fact that I was there to listen to Claire's writing and that I encouraged her to read and re-read her stories, helped her in this monitoring process. She spontaneously used me also, as well as her sisters and her father, to compare her reading of books, or more accurately her interpretations, with those of other readers. Moreover because reading is above all a meaning-based activity for Claire (Goodman, 1976; Smith, 1975;) she continually monitors

for meaning so that if, for example, her reading is not making sense she suspects that she may have missed a page.

There is evidence then from these observations, that Claire's cognitive processes in both reading and writing can be viewed as composing processes. It is particularly interesting to note that in many aspects of the composing process I could more readily apply Claire's reading, than her writing, to Tierney and Pearson's tentative model, . Only as she began to gain control over her writing and to connect it more closely with her own life did her writing processes begin to approximate the model also. Underlying most of the control was a metacognitive awareness of her own processes (Flavell, 1976; Brown, 1980). Claire's knowledge of her own processes, particularly noticeable in reading where she often articulated her strategies, indicated that her knowledge had developed from an unconscious acquisition stage to a more active control of knowledge stage (Vygotsky, 1962). Not only did she realise that there were problems, but she knew why and she knew what to do about them.

Although the broad scope of this study precludes a detailed discussion of many important issues arising from the data, it is fitting to address briefly the place of talk in the reading-writing relationship. It is now almost two decades since Moffett (1968) emphasised the interrelationships between these three components of language development. Without examining the nature of the interaction between Claire and myself or others in the family I have, I

hope, presented sufficient documentation to show that talk is indeed a vital part of Claire's development in reading and writing, and that each of the components acts upon and with each other. At times talk can be a precursor to literacy activities, as in the planning for story writing or the verbal speculations about what Claire would read next. It is also often interwoven into the activities themselves as witnessed by the considerable discussion both "on" and "off" topic, in the story writing sessions and in Claire's relating of anecdotes and incidents from the books she was reading. There were also many retrospective conversations, particularly about her books. Much of this talk was initiated by Claire herself. Sometimes I asked a general question such as whether she was enjoying a particular book, or probed for further information on a topic that she had introduced, but mostly she was the one who asked questions, made comments or introduced literacy related topics.

Talk appeared to play a variety of roles from that of getting and giving information, to thinking aloud and speculating, to exploring facets of reading and writing in greater depth, to deepening understandings of characters and events, to extending and strenthening the links between literacy and life. In trying to pinpoint what it was about all this talk that was important for Claire, I came back again to the notion of control. Talk was important for her because these were her questions, her topics, her explorations, her meaning-making. She was "acknowledging and

accessing (her) personal ways of making sense" (Dias, 1985, p. 285).

It is important to note not only the similarities, but also some of the differences between reading and writing. In our enthusiasm to see the inherent relationship between these "two sides of the same basic process" (Squire, 1983, p.581), there is a tendency at times to minimise their differences. Certainly, Claire had no trouble making huge distinctions between them. Graves (1985) points out that reading is generally a much more private act. Once children are able to read silently, and Claire did so from some time in her sixth year, they are far less open to criticism of their ability. They can simply get on and practice their new skill in the privacy of their own favourite corner. Writing, on the other hand is almost always a public act, and therefore puts the learner at greater risk (Harste et al 1984). Furthermore, Smith (1978) says, "writing is much more demanding than reading, even in a narrow physical sense" (p. 61). A reader must attend to a small amount of visual information and can even skip words lines or pages, whereas a writer must attend to every word. Claire often referred to the physical difficulties of writing, and such complaints should not be too readily dismissed. As Rosen and Rosen (1973) state, "It is easy to think of many reasons why a young child should not want to write, and very difficult to think of reasons why he should" (p. 85).

This is all the more reason, of course, why both teachers and parents should be sensitive to children's beginning efforts in writing and should focus not on the surface features of the writing but on the meaning that is being generated (Calkins, 1983, 1986; Clay, 1975; Goodman, 1986; Graves, 1983; Harste et al 1984; Holdaway, 1979; Newman, 1984; Temple et al, 1982). Claire's "learned vulnerability" (Harste et al, 1984) in writing, a vulnerability learned within a culture that for so long has valued product over process and correctness over meaning, undoubtedly contributed in large part to the distinctions she makes between reading and writing and to the corresponding attitudes she takes towards each.

Writing Growth Reviewed

Whereas Claire's growth in reading was steady and consistent, her growth in writing was more sporadic, and at times even startling. She had, I believe, a certain type of control in her writing, even in the early stages of the study. She was aware of the rules for worksheet writing: it doesn't matter what you write as long as you write something neatly and correctly i.e. in the "right" way (Edelsky and Smith, 1984). She wrote accordingly, and she also wrote as little as possible and avoided writing situations. Her many wistful comments at home about wishing she could write as fast as we did, or as well as we did, indicated that she did not see herself equal to us in writing, as she did in reading. She was indeed very unsure about her writing

ability. The type of control she maintained here was not conducive to growth. By dismissing writing as boring and avoiding it as much as she could, she denied herself the experience which is so necessary for writing development. Meek (1983) describes adolescents learning to read who used the word 'boring' as a warding-off strategy. I had the sense that Claire used it in a similar way in reference to her writing, a way of letting others know that it was of no consequence to her and that it was neither meaningful, interesting nor fun. The writing control that she demonstrated early in the study then, was inflexible and self-defeating.

A breakthrough seemed to occur when she began to see writing in the same light as reading, as a social activity. Numerous researchers, among them Bissex (1980), Calkins (1986), Goodman (1986), Harste et al (1984), Taylor (1983), emphasise that literacy activities are most meaningful and purposeful when they are rooted in the social life of the child. Vygotsky (1978) suggests, "Every function of the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later, on the individual level... All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals" (p. 57).

During the time that we wrote in our journals on holiday, Claire's concerns changed from an incapacitating (Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod & Rosen, 1975; Perl, 1979) focus on the surface features of the writing, the spelling,

punctuation and handwriting, to a more light hearted concern for writing something that she could share with others. A child in the Taylor study (1983), kept a journal for just two days when it was suggested by his mother, and wrote very little. Although Claire wrote only six entries, considerable growth was evident during that time. Perhaps the difference was that this was something that the whole family was doing and much of the focus was on sharing and enjoying. The concept of models who are involved and engaged in their own writing has been considered essential in affirming the value of writing for children (Calkins, 1983, 1986; Graves, 1984). These same researchers have also continually emphasised the importance of the opportunity for children to share their writing. "The essential human act at the heart of writing is the act of giving... it is a gift of yourself" (Elbow, 1981). The encouragement and approval Claire received from others in response to her writing was important at this time because she was still so unsure about her own abilities.

A further large advancement occurred when Claire chose writing over other possible activities such as reading and playing games, as an activity to share with me. Again the social aspect of the event was of paramount importance. She even opted to share my chair as we wrote which gave the physical closeness of bed-time story reading, what Moffett and Wagner (1976) have referred to as the lap method in reading. As we each adapted to this new experience Claire continued to suggest more writing and began to think of it as

fun. The shared nature of this writing was important not only for the reason that it was an enjoyable social occasion, but also for the opportunities it provided for me to support Claire in her writing efforts.

I compare the kind of support that Claire always received when participating in board games that were quite difficult for her, playing along with someone else, playing with modified rules and so on, with the more rigid support given in the more serious activity of writing. Like her teachers, we too often expected her to "go it alone" as a writer and to be able to get it more or less right first time. Vygotsky's (1962) insightful remarks about the "zone of proximal development" have been helpful in showing me why our collaborative writing episodes were so successful. The suggestion that "What a child can do in cooperation today (she) can do alone tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 101) is of considerable importance when applied to this context. My presence was of help to Claire in some practical ways such as helping with spelling. But more fundamentally I acted as a sounding board, a listener to ideas, a partner in the making of meaning. Like Harste et al (1984) I see the concept of "tracking" (Halliday, 1980) as a more useful way of describing the interactions that occurred both in these story writing events and in many other discussions about books, reading and writing, than the concept of "scaffolding" which has been suggested as a model for early language development. Where "scaffolding" suggests that the adult is in control of

the event, "tracking" implies a more equal participation with each partner at times initiating and yielding to the other. In fact to the extent that any scaffolding was occurring in these writing episodes it may have well have been Claire who scaffolded my learning. Claire began to gain authentic control over her writing and tolerated my unwitting preoccupation with conventions and occasional interference, but did not allow me to take over her text in any way. She felt free to take the help she needed and ignore the rest. There is no doubt that Claire knew what real control felt like because she had experienced it in her reading all along, and now she felt it in her writing too.

Reading Growth Reviewed

Claire's confidence in her own ability to read, and to enjoy what she read, was maintained and grew throughout the study. The facility with which she handled books and was able to use the various parts of a book for her own purposes; the easy and natural way she read aloud for her own or another's pleasure; her sense of herself as a reader equal to others in the family and able to recommend books to them; her awareness of text difficulties and her abilities to adjust her strategies to address those difficulties; her sense of the necessity of reading to life along with her sure sense of direction, control and purpose in her own reading: these were some of the very important ways in which Claire demonstrated that she was a reader. Indeed the sheer volume of reading

that she did during the year (Clay, 1972; Holdaway, 1984), ensured her continuing success in reading.

To a great extent Claire was able to consolidate and build upon a solid control in reading as a result of the connectedness between reading and her life. Conversely, the more she felt in control, the more she used her reading to expand her connections. The "backward and forward flow between books and life" which White (1956) saw in her daughter's literacy development was also clearly evident in my own observations. Unlike Bissex' (1980) son Paul, who shared his informational reading, but rarely his stories, Claire spoke often about the fiction she was reading. She was quite clearly actively involved in her reading and transacting with texts in the aesthetic sense described by Rosenblatt (1978).

> In aesthetic reading, the qualitative aspects, the voice, the tone that has been established, often have an important effect not only on the emotive impact of the words that follow but on their meaning. (p. 25)

Both Harding (1977) and Britton (1970) describe this response to fiction as occurring in the spectator role, somewhat similar to the role taken by a person who is an onlooker at live events. Such a role, says Harding, "may in certain ways be even more formative than the events in which we take part" (P. 61), because a spectator, "freed from the necessity to act, to meet the social demands made upon a participant, uses his freedom to evaluate more broadly, more amply " (Britton, 1970, p. 109). Thus, the events portrayed

in literature, which include drama as well as fiction, have a "deep and extensive influence on our systems of value" (Harding, 1977, P. 61). The integral connection of values with knowledge is further elaborated in Britton's (1982) statement:

> But I think there are two aspects to our personal construct systems. There is a knowledge aspect - an organisation of the inferences from experiences as to what the world is like... And there is a value aspect - an organisation of how much and in what ways we <u>care</u> (in D.H. Lawrence's words, "the way our sympathies flow and recoil".)
>
> (Britton, 1982, p. 209)

When Claire wondered what 'liberated' meant in the context of the Ramona books, or when she asked whether handicapped people can get married, she was clearly organising her knowledge of what the world is like. When she repeatedly referred to Mr. Quimbey's job loss and to the way Ramona felt about it, when she wondered whether I would get a job too, when she puzzled about man's inhumanity to man as portrayed in the Anne Frank drama or empathised with Anne's feelings about the loss of her friend, she seemed to be organising the value aspect of her personal construct system. There is no doubt that she acquired a good deal of new knowledge about history and geography, about people and life, during the course of her reading of literature and our subsequent discussions about it. But her knowledge went beyond the merely informational for she gained a whole new awareness of how things might be otherwise, for her especially, but also for others.

A Last Look At Revision

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest among researchers (Dillon, 1985; McConaghy, 1985; Mikklesen, 1985; Roser and Martinez, 1985) in the responses that children make to literature. The experience that evolves between readers and texts, the "poem" of which Rosenblatt writes (1978), is being examined both for its affective and cognitive dimensions. Vygotsky (1962) was concerned that cognition and affect are too often separated, claiming "the existence of a dynamic system of meaning in which the affective and the intellect unite" (p.8). Wilkinson (1985) uses Wordsworth's term "organic sensibility" to describe the response of students to their experiences as portrayed in their writing. "This is at once cognitive and affective, the cognitive interacting with and modifying the affect constantly" (p. 56). The same might be said of children's response to the experiences that they compose through their reading. Claire's immediate response to the stories she read was a subjective one, a feeling one. But the interplay between affect and cognition was clearly observable and it is ultimately the workings of both together that contribute to her growth as a literate person, and indeed as a human being.

Because some of my most interesting observations occurred in relation to Claire's re-reading of books I will return to the notion of the revision aspect of the reading process discussed briefly in a previous section. Bissex (1980) noted the importance of re-reading for her son as a

factor which enabled him to practice his skill and to help his comprehension. I observed similar results from Claire's practice of re-reading. However, the effects of re-reading in Claire's case seemed to go well beyond just cognitive benefits. The "passionate attention" (McGuire, 1973) that Claire gave to the Ramona books was a deeply personal response which encouraged her to keep looking for the "certain ideal surprisingness" (Lewis, 1977, p. 87) in the stories. After reading initially for the "sheer narrative lust" (Lewis, 1977, p. 87) she returned many times to the Ramona texts and explored the stories and their meanings in greater detail. This practice, spurred by her affective involvement enabled her to accomplish a "form of mental 'flickering' between a commitment to the Secondary World (of the novel) and critical evaluation of it" (Warlow, 1977, p. 95).

In his study of adolescents' response to literature, Squire (1964), discovered that the readers who were most involved in what they were reading were able retrospectively, to make the most insightful critical remarks about the stories. Britton (1977) agrees that the feeling aspect of response is a necessary pre-condition for the growth of a sense of literary form. But he cautions against forcing talk about "conventions, devices, techniques" (p.108) too soon, and particularly before the age of 11 years. This leads back to McGuire's (1973) definition of "passionate attention" as "the richest short description of literary criticism I know"

(p. viii). In speaking of the 'amateur' critic, McGuire points out that the root of the word 'amateur' is Latin for 'to love'. Thus, he says, "The work of a critic is with something he loves" (p. 11). There is no doubt in my mind that Claire was being an amateur critic as she read and re-read the Ramona books. I did not have to force talk about literary form, because she initiated such discussions. She wanted to extend her experience of these books at a variety of levels and so at various times she: shared amusing incidents from the stories, related them to her own life and her life to them, saw patterns in common between these and other books she read, explored new experiences and feelings, examined the form of the writing to discover why it was so successful. Indeed she gave the Ramona books that "passionate attention" which W. H. Auden says apprentice writers give to each other's work. To put it in the words of Frank Smith, Claire was "reading like a writer" (Smith, 1983). Perhaps then, this state of "passionate attention" is a focal point for literacy growth.

Claire gave the same rapt interest to the literacy and literature event which concluded the study, the experience of the Anne Frank play. McCreesh (1977), building on Piaget's notions of egocentricity in his research on the child's concept of the tragic, declares that young children "are insensitive to horrific situations by the very quality of their thinking" (p. 115). He suggests that drama and stories help to sensitise children to the darker side of life and to

educate their imaginations. I have previously stated that I saw evidence that Claire was able to see events from the point of view of others: She saw things from both Ramona and her sister's perspective; she understood my feelings in my story and also those of my handicapped friend. She identified with the leprechaun she created, but could appreciate his mother's frame of mind too. Our extensive discussions about Anne Frank convinced me still further that far from being insensitive to such tragedy or seeing mass death as the greater tragedy (McCreesh, 1977) Claire was most deeply moved by the deaths of the few people in the play. Perhaps this supports McCreesh's call for drama and stories to "enable a child to absorb and communicate experience" (p. 118). But perhaps, too, he underestimates the abilities of children who have had literary experiences from a young age. The work of Donaldson (1978) has been instrumental in demonstrating that young children are able to decentre and appreciate different viewpoints. Harste et al (1984),state that "experience affects the kinds and quality of thinking children are capable of doing; thinking ability, like language ability, is thus context dependent" (p. 66). It is possible that Claire's extensive involvement with stories, which gives her access to the experience and viewpoints of others, enables her to adopt a variety of alignments as she reads and writes. It is the "depth and breadth of human experience" (Meek, 1982, p. 170) found in books that gives her an awareness and understanding of other points of view.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Summary of the study

In recent years the home context has been the focus of an increasing number of research projects. Following the lead of parent researchers interested in how children learn oral language (Halliday, 1975; Scollon and Scollon, 1981; Weir, 1962), others have studied their young children's interaction with books (Butler, 1975; Crago and Crago, 1983; White, 1954), and also the growth of reading and writing in both pre-school and school age children (Baghban, 1984; Lass, 1982, 1983; Bissex, 1980). These enquiries have contributed significantly to our knowledge of how children learn language outside of the formal educational system and especially have helped establish the view of language learning as a social as well as a cognitive process.

With the exception of the Bissex (1980) research, most home studies of reading and writing development have focussed on the earliest levels of literacy growth. My own study was, in part, an attempt to add to the small body of information, that presently exists, on literacy growth beyond the first couple of school years. I focussed on both reading and writing growth and explored the links between these twin strands of literacy. Also, I attempted to examine the ways in which one child's experiences with reading and writing

brought meaning to her life, and how she brought her own meaning to literacy activities.

The child who participated in the year-long enquiry is my youngest daughter Claire, who had just turned 7 years and was completing grade two, as the study began. The research was terminated shortly after her eighth birthday, although some anecdotal material after that time has been included. The first phase of the study involved a description of the home context, including retrospective accounts of the literacy development of both parents. I also traced Claire's pre-school and early school experiences with reading and writing activities in order to provide a context for the active research phase of the study.

The study was naturalistic in nature, and ethnographic techniques were used in the collection of data. These included: direct observation in our home and on family outings, compilation of family histories, on the spot and retrospective note taking, audio-taping, informal interviewing, and collection of Claire's artwork, stories, notes, lists and other written products as well as lists of her reading materials.

Summary of the Findings

It is perhaps axiomatic to state that over the course of one year I observed considerable growth in Claire's reading and writing. However, some of the more interesting findings of this study relate to the nature of the growth I observed,

to the way in which the connections between reading and writing were observable within this growth and to the overall picture that evolved of the place of literacy in this child's life.

Growth in reading continued in the way that it began, with enthusiasm, enjoyment and committment. There were no apparent great leaps in reading development, rather there were consistent, steady steps which cumulatively added up to some surprising progress. Claire's sure sense of control in this area allowed her to direct her own reading and to read for her own purposes and pleasures. Reading was a way of connecting with others in her life; it was a way of bringing other people and experiences into her life; a means of learning about others and seeing the shared patterns of their experiences.

Reading could at times be a private pleasure, but was often also a social celebration, a sharing of Claire's vision of a piece of literature with others who valued her sharing. This vision began most often with feelings. But it developed at times into a discerning attitude, a cognitive response born out of an emotional one. This was seen most clearly in relation to the Ramona books to which Claire became instantly attracted and to which she returned over and over again. Her fascination for these books still continues, though she has also moved on to other books. It seems then that reading, already an integral part of Claire's life, was becoming increasingly a tool through which to live, laugh, and learn.

Just as studies of early literacy have suggested the importance of self-selection of reading materials and negotiation of chosen stories between parent and child in the shared reading situation, so too this study demonstrates the continuing importance for young readers to be able to choose their own books. The majority of Claire's reading experiences have enabled this freedom of choice, so that she now feels totally confident in organizing her own reading environment. She welcomes suggestions from others and loves the social aspect of reading books that others have read, but the ultimate choices are hers. She is free to "choose one kind of existence rather than another" (Meek, 1982, p.17) and to make connections between books and other books, and between books and life; the connections that are important and meaningful for her.

In writing, her growth was less even, but was at times almost dramatic. Initially Claire's feelings of confusion about the nature and purposes of writing were reflected in negative attitudes towards it and in avoidance of writing situations. Despite knowing what real control felt like because of her reading, she was unable to grasp it at first in writing. Her over-concern with conventions appeared to inhibit her ability to focus on meanings and intentions. As she began to experience some enjoyable writing events, a more positive attitude developed and writing even became a chosen activity. This change in attitude appeared to relate closely to the social context in which the writing took place. When

writing was a shared family activity (as it was during our summer vacation) with the focus on content, her apprehension and reluctance to write gradually subsided. The writing that produced her book of stories took place in the context of time shared with a parent, comparable to time shared through games playing or story reading. Although it was, and still is, difficult for Claire to overcome her concerns for immediate neatness and correctness in her writing, a de-emphasis on these aspects seemed instrumental in enabling greater confidence in the writing situation. The element of humour, so important in her reading and in her life generally, became an acceptable part of the writing and also allowed Claire to become more engaged in this aspect of literacy. As Claire became more comfortable with the writing process, she developed an increasing awareness that writing, like reading, was a way to create her own meanings.

Just as it was important for Claire to be able to choose her own reading material, so too she needed to feel the same control in writing. When the topics and ideas were hers the words came more easily. Crucial, too, were the strategies she used to allow herself thinking time. The minutes spent seemingly "off-task" appeared to be critical to the process of working through her composition in her own way. Moreover, when she really did have a sense of ownership over her writing she was confident in using the strategies that she knew worked for her, and did not allow others to take over.

Underlying the growth in the individual areas of reading and writing, were patterns which were common to both reading and writing. Emerging from recent research which describes both reading and writing as composing processes, the concept of composing was seen to be especially relevant to Claire's reading. While writing is obviously an active and constructive process it was clearly evident that there is nothing passive or merely receptive about Claire's reading. Rather, she demonstrated a tremendous amount of interaction with her texts and continually "lived through" her reading in the aesthetic sense described by Rosenblatt (1978). It may well be that it is through her experience as a constructive reader that Claire is further developing her concepts of writing as a composing process.

It is relevant to repeat again, as so many others have, the fundamental importance of the social context to both reading and writing. Growth in both areas seemed to be related to the extent to which reading and writing were integrated in the total fabric of daily life and were a means of ordering, controlling and making sense of daily living. The evidence of this lay in Claire's initially differing attitudes towards reading and writing, and the way in which these converged to some extent as writing activities became more deeply rooted in her social life.

Finally, it is vital to note the central importance of the affective dimension of this child's literacy growth. She is passionately attentive to her reading and because of this

committment her reading ability, including the various dimensions of comprehension and critical reading, grew and will, I think, continue to grow. The impetus to read and to learn from her reading came very much from within, to the extent that her passion drew other members of the family into her reading world. Her enjoyment and engagement was infectious. With purposeful engagement in the written strand of literacy, Claire's writing also blossomed in many ways. While her devotion to writing was neither as extensive nor as deep as her committment to her reading, there were, particularly during the leprechaun story-writing episodes, many hints of the passionate attention first noted by Auden. "Passionate attention" does indeed seem to be a key element to growth in both reading and writing.

Implications of the study

Because this study focussed on one child in her home environment and because it was descriptive in nature, it is neither feasible nor desirable to draw major implications for schools from the study. Thus, implications in this section will comprise mainly recommendations for future research arising from the study, as well as some tentative suggestions for parents, bearing in mind the limitations stated in Chapter 1. In the 'Reflections' section following the implications, I will consider my own new understandings of learning vis a vis both home and school.

The home

My close observations of Claire over an extended period of time allowed me to see how important it is for literacy activities to be deeply rooted in the daily life of the family. When such is the case, reading and writing are more likely to be seen by children as worthwhile and functional. This is of particular relevance for parents who may often expect their children to become competent in reading and writing when these activities have little place in the parent's own lives. Literacy is transmitted through the culture of both home and school and children will already have acquired many concepts about literacy as well as attitudes and responses to it before their formal schooling begins. These concepts, attitudes and responses will continue to be nurtured by the home, for better or worse, through the years of formal schooling. Hence it is incumbent upon parents to try to make reading and writing meaningful and integral components of family life if they are to give their children reasons to make literacy a part of their expanding worlds.

Since the findings of this study support those of Schickedanz and Sullivan (1984) that reading events outnumber writing activities in the homes of pre-schoolers, perhaps parents might give some thought to ways of including writing more often as social activities. While Claire's reluctance in the area of writing might be due to a combination of factors, it is possible that early and continuing

opportunities to experience positive writing episodes within the home context would help to overcome such reluctance. In both reading and writing, the focus would be on the sense-making aspects of reading and writing over the conventions of form.

Even when children appear to be fairly self-sufficient in reading and writing, parents can be a means of extending and deepening their literacy experiences by being partners in those experiences. This might imply becoming familiar with and cultivating an appreciation for children's books and discussing them at the children's invitation. Claire's experiences in reading suggest that depth of reading is at least as important as breadth of reading. Thus, re-reading of books might be seen as a possible way of promoting critical reading and a more complex response to literature. Of course it must be the child's choice to re-read, especially outside of the school environment where there are far fewer constraints regarding reading materials, times for reading and so forth. In the area of writing, parents can provide an accepting audience for children's writing, or can support writing assignments through talk and practical help. It is also important to note that confidence and control in one aspect of literacy does not automatically indicate confidence and control in both. Parents can support and encourage growth in both reading and writing and can realise that it is alright to do for children the tasks that they

cannot accomplish themselves. Support can then be gradually withdrawn as children take over more of the responsibility.

Claire's experiences also suggest that it is important to accept children as readers and writers from the start and to continue to have faith in their abilities to grow in literacy. It all points to a fairly basic belief in children as successful learners, who may not always subscribe to accepted adult notions of the learning pathways they should follow but who will find their own ways if we let them. In recalling many of the delaying or time-biding tactics used by Claire, especially as she went about the composition of her own written texts, I tend to wonder how she would have rated in "time on task" measurements by which successful teaching/learning is so often measured. Far from being wasted or unproductive time this was Claire's way of developing her own strategies for successful writing and thus for gaining control over the writing process. Her clear statements regarding the process of re-reading also demonstrate her solid understanding of what works for her. We must be able to trust that children are knowing and able in their own resources. There are strong implications here for allowing children the time and space necessary to take the control, and to make the connections they will need to make, to become fully literate.

Further research

The broad scope of this study ensured that many implications for further research became evident both as the

study progressed and during the course of writing up the findings. I have selected those which seem most pressing and in need of enquiry, but readers may find others that they deem equally important and worthy of further research.

1. There are still so few studies which focus in a holistic manner on individual children as they learn to read and write, that we would benefit from many repetitions of this type of research. Home studies similar to this one would contribute to a picture of the breadth as well as the depth in differences and similarities among children.
2. Other longitudinal studies similar to those done in the area of writing by Calkins (1983) and Graves (1975) might also be done in schools focussing on both reading and writing. Further variations might include studies which look at children in both home and school settings or comparative studies, describing growth both from the home and school perspectives.
3. Paralleling studies which have described oral language development in the home and those which looked at early literacy interactions between parents and children, home studies which examine the nature of the interaction between parents and older children engaged in literacy activities could be carried out.
4. Relative to the question of the relationship between reading and writing, this is an area of research still in its infancy, with a theoretical background still to be fully developed. There is a need for many different

kinds of research in this area.

a) Case studies of individuals might look at the ways in which the reading and writing processes differ across children.

b) The place of oral language in the reading and writing process might be further explored. Researchers could examine the ways in which children use talk to develop and deepen their growth in literacy.

c) Some of the individual aspects of the composing process could be examined in detail across a range of children e.g. The relationship of re-reading in the reading process to revision in the writing process, or the extent to which alignment is a part of both reading and writing processes.

d) Studies might also focus on the extent to which strategies that children find useful in one area of literacy are, or can be, transferred to the other area.

e) Very little information regarding reading and writing informational or content area material was obtained in this study. Thus, further studies might explore the nature of the relationship between reading and writing processes in this context.

5. The area of response to literature is currently enjoying considerable interest. In light of the findings in this study, further research on the spontaneous reactions

that children have to books they have read would be very useful.

a) In view of the fact that the home environment is often more conducive to such factors as self-selection of books, choice of reading positions and preferred length of reading time, studies in the home context might be particularly informative.

b) Comparative studies might also look at the nature of the reading experience at home compared to school reading experiences.

6. The affective dimensions of literacy development were such an integral part of this study that I see this aspect as being a necessary component of any research which looks at growth in reading and writing. Cognitive processes will then be integrated with "the fullness of life,...the personal needs and interests, the inclinations and impulses, of the thinker". (Vygotsky,1962, p.8)

Reflections

When initially considering the potential significance of this study, I wrote in my research proposal that perhaps its greatest significance lay in the opportunities it provided for my own learning. Thus it seems to be appropriate, perhaps even necessary, to devote at least some small part of this document to introspection and reflection on how I have changed and, hopefully, grown as a result of carrying out the

study. But first I would like to give brief consideration to the effects that the study had on Claire.

I have no doubt that the increased interaction between Claire and myself, that occurred as a result of this study, affected her growth as a reader and writer. Certainly, at the very least, there was a kind of consciousness-raising (Pelto, p.95). For example, her pre-occupation with spelling precipitated many discussions which led her to understand something about the notion of invented spelling, a concept of which she had no previous conscious awareness. She began to see that the spelling "mistakes" that she made were common to many children who are gaining control over the written forms of language. As time went on, when picking up on her errors, she began to ask if other children sometimes spelled words this way and seemed to gain a measure of acceptance of her misspellings when she saw that she was not alone in her struggles. Similar effects could be seen in other areas such as handwriting.

In seeing, hearing and participating directly in Claire's living literacy, I re-learned many of the things that I thought I already knew. My knowledge about phenomena such as invented spelling and risk-taking became rooted in experience rather than being only conceptual learning. A greater sense of tolerance was facilitated by the growing realization that literacy is transmitted through the culture of society as a whole. Hence, for example, I see that concepts of literacy which stress a skills approach to

language learning (an orientation which is not in harmony with current theories of literacy learning), are deeply entrenched in the psyche of our culture and are resistant to quick and easy change. While I had "learned" this concept of cultural transmission in an abstract way during my graduate studies, it was not until I observed it in my data and, more precisely, saw and heard myself subscribing to practices that I thought I had outgrown, that this knowledge became truly meaningful for me. Noting then my own lapses, and recalling the often slow and winding path of my own growth to new understandings enabled me to be more accepting of the difficulties others face in adapting to educational change.

While there continues to be a tension at times between my own beliefs about the best conditions for literacy growth and the beliefs often held by schools and society, I am confident that a dialogic stance will precipitate resolution of some of these differences. Overall, my involvement in this research has spurred me towards a more critical evaluation of my own teaching, in the roles of both teacher and parent. In a very real sense, the study resulted in praxis for me - refelection and action upon the world in order to transform it (Freire, 1970). My own literacy has grown accordingly.

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APPENDIX A

SOME OF THE BOOKS READ BY CLAIRE AT HOME:
MAY, 1985 - MAY, 1986

* Indicates book had been previously read, or was both read and re-read during this period.

Ahlberg, J. & Ahlberg, A. (1977). Jeremiah in the dark woods. London: Fontana.

Aiken, J. (1968) A necklace of raindrops and other stories. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin.

Ainsworth, R. (1969). The Noah's Ark. London: Hamlyn.

Allan, T. (1973). Willie the squowse. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin.

Ardizonne, E. & Ardizonne, A. (1966). The little girl and the tiny doll. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin. *

Banks, L. R. (1980). The indian in the cupboard. New York: Avon.

Beano Book 1986. (1985). London: Thomson.

Blume, J. (1971). Freckle juice. New York: Dell. *

Blume, J. (1972). Tales of a fourth grade nothing. New York: Dell.

Blume, J. (1980). Superfudge. New York: Dell. *

Briggs, R. (1973). Father Christmas. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin. *

Briggs, R. (1975). Father Christmas goes on holiday. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin.

Catling, P. (1952). The chocolate touch. New York: Bantam.

Christian, M. B. (1982). Sebastian super sleuth and the hair of the dog mystery. New York: Macmillan.

Christian, M. B. (1983). Sebastian super sleuth and the crummy yummies caper. New York: Macmillan.

Cleary, B. (1952). Henry and Beezus. New York: Dell.

Cleary, B. (1955). Beezus and Ramona. New York: Dell. *

Cleary, B. (1957). Henry and the paper route. New York: Dell. *

Cleary, B. (1964). Ribsy. New York: Dell.

Cleary, B. (1973). Socks. New York: William Morrow. *

Cleary, B. (1975). Ramona the brave. New York: Scholastic.*

Cleary, B. (1975). Ramona and her father. New York: Dell. *

Cleary, B. (1979). Ellen Tebbits. New York: Dell.

Cleary, B. (1979). Henry Huggins. New York: Dell.

Cleary, B. (1979). Ramona and her mother. New York: Dell. *

Cleary, B. (1981). Ramona Quimby age 8. New York: Dell. *

Cleary, B. (1982). Ralph S. Mouse. New York: Dell.

Cleary, B. (1982). Ramona the pest. New York: Dell. *

Cleary, B. (1984). Ramona Forever. New York: Dell. *

Dahl, R. (1961). James and the giant peach. New York: Bantam.

Dahl, R, (1966). The magic finger. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin. *

Dahl. R. (1977). The enormous crocodile. New York: Bantam. *

Dandy Book 1986. (1985). London: Thomson

Davis, J. 1980). Garfield at large. Toronto: Random House. *

Davis, J. (1984). Garfield what's cooking. Horsham, Sussex: Ravette. *

Drury, R. (1971). The Finches fabulous furnace. Toronto: Little, Brown & Co.

Edwards, D. (1957). When my naughty little sister was good. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin.

Fujikawa, G. (1980). Jenny learns a lesson. New York: Grossett & Dunlap. *

Giff, P. R. (1984). The beast in Ms Rooney's room. New York: Dell. *

Giff, P. R. (1984). December secrets. New York: Dell. *

Giff, P. R. (1984). Fishface. New York: Dell. *

Giff, P. R. (1985). In the dinosaur's paw. New York: Dell.

Giff, P. R. (1985). Say "Cheese". New York: Dell.

Giff, P. R. (1985). The small potatoes and the sleep-over. New York: Dell.

Giff, P. R. (1985). Snaggle Doodles. New York: Dell. *

Giff, P. R. (1986). Sunny-side up. New York: Dell.

Gretz, S. (1970). The bears who stayed indoors. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin.

Grimm. (1981). The brave little tailor. Closter, NJ: Sharon. *

Hoban, R. (1968). A birthday for Frances. New York: Harper & Row. *

Hoban, R. (1969). Best friends for Frances. New York: Harper & Row. *

Hoban, R. (1969). The mole family's christmas. New York: Parent's Magazine Press.

Hyman, T. S. (1977). The sleeping beauty. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Jones, T. (1981). Fairy Tales. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin.

Judy, S. & Judy, S. (1980). Gifts of writing. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Hurwitz, J. (1980). Superduper Teddy. New York: Dell.

Jarrell, R. (1964). The gingerbread rabbit. New York: Macmillan.

Krasilovsky, P. (1953). The cow who fell in the canal. New York: Doubleday. *

Lee, D. (1974). Alligator Pie. Toronto: Macmillan. *

Lee, D. (1983). Jelly Belly. Toronto: Macmillan. *

Mayer, M. (1976). There's a nightmare in my cupboard. London: Methuen: *

McKie, R. (1979). The joke book. New York: Random House.

McKissack, P. (1984). Lights out Christopher. Minneapolis: Augsberg.

Montgomery, R. (1981). The haunted house: A choose your own adventure book. New York: Bantam.

Montgomery, R. (1982). House of danger: A choose your own adventure book. New York: Bantam.

Mosel, A. (1968). Tikki Tikki Tembo. New York:Scholastic. *

Muir, F. (1982) What-a-mess in Autumn. London: Carousel. *

Nissen, J. (Ed.) (1978). The crack-a-joke-book. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin. *

Pearce, P. (1978). The battle of Bubble and Squeak. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin.

Peterson, J. (1977). The Littles and the trash tinies. New York: Scholastic.

Peterson, J. (1968). The Littles to the rescue. New York: Scholastic.

Richler, M. (1975). Jacob Two-Two meets the hooded fang. New York: Bantam.

Robinson, B. (1972). The best Christmas pageant ever. New York: Avon.

Sanders, C. Jimmy and the big machine and other stories. Unpublished . (See Appendix C.).

Silverstein, S. (1974). Where the sidewalk ends. New York: Harper & Row. *

Silverstein, S. (1981). A light in the attic. New York: Harper & Row. *

Williams, B. (1979). Whatever happened to Beverly Bigler's birthday? New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. *

Usborne Brainbenders. (1983). Number puzzles. Burlington, Ont: Hayes. *

Usborne Brainbenders. (1983). Brain Puzzles. Burlington, Ont: Hayes. *

Viorst, J. (1973). Rosie and Michael. Hartford, Conn: Atheneum. *

Wayne, J. (1972). Sprout and the dogsitter. New York: McGraw-Hill.

APPENDIX B

SOME OF THE BOOKS READ TO CLAIRE AT HOME:
MAY, 1985- MAY, 1986.

* Indicates book had been previously read, or was both read and re-read during this period.

Andersen, H. C. (1981). Michael Hague's Favourite Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston. *

Banks, L. R. (1980). The indian in the cupboard. New York: Avon.

Belloc, H. (1984). Cautionary tales for children. New York: Holiday.

Bettina. (1959). Trovato. London : Oxford University Press.

Bond, M. (1958). A bear called Paddington. Glasgow: William Collins Sons. *

Brychta, J. (1971). Jack and the beanstalk. London: Franklin Watts. *

Carroll, L. (1946). Alice's adventure's in wonderland. Cleveland, Ohio: Collins.

Cole, W. (Ed.). (1966). Oh what nonsense. New York: The Viking Press.

Cooney, B. (1958). Chanticleer and the fox. Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside.

Cummings, E. E. (1950). Fairy Tales. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanich. *

Francis, F. (1971). Natasha's new doll. London: Collins.

Grosvenor, D. (1978). Zoo Babies. National Geographic Society

Harrison, D. (1972). The book of giant stories. New York: McGraw-Hill. *

H.R.H Prince of Wales (1980). The old man of Lochnagar. London: Farrar Strauss & Giroux. *

Klimo, K. (Ed.) (1977). Tasha Tudor's bedtime book. New York: Platt & Munk. *

Kurelek, W. (1976). A northern nativity. Montreal: Tundra.

Lawrence, M. (1979). The olden days coat. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart. *

Lee, D. (1983). Jelly Belly. Toronto: Macmillan. *

Lewis, C.S. (1950). The lion, the witch and the wardrobe. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Puffin.

Lobel A. (1980). Fables. New York: Harper & Row.

Lobel, A. (1982). Ming Lo moves the mountain. New York: Scholastic.

Milne, A. A. (1926). Winnie-The-Pooh. New York: Dutton. *

Milne, A.A. (1928). The house at Pooh corner. New York: Dutton. *

Mosel, A. (1968). Tikki Tikki Tembo. New York:Scholastic. *

Opie, I. & Opie, P. (1974). The classic fairy tales. London: Oxford University Press.

Owl Magazine (Eds). (1983). Owl's question and answer book. Toronto: Greey de Pencier.

Potter, B. The story of a fierce bad rabbit. London: F. Warne. *

Potter, B. The tale of Benjamin Bunny. London: F. Warne. *

Potter, B. The tale of the flopsy bunnies. London, F. Warne. *

Potter, B. The tale of Jemima Puddle-duck. London: F. Warne. *

Potter, B. The tale of Peter Rabbit. London: F. Warne. *

Potter, B. The tale of Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle. London: F. Warne. *

Potter, B. The tale of Mrs, Tittlemouse. London: F. Warne. *

Potter, B. The tale of Tom Kitten. London: F. Warne. *

Potter, B. The tale of two bad mice. London F. Warne. *

Silverstein, S. (1974). Where the sidewalk ends. New York: Harper & Row. *

Silverstein, S. (1981). A light in the attic. New York: Harper & Row. *

Singer, I.B. (1968). When Shlemiel went to Warsaw and other stories. New York: Dell.

Steig, W. (1972). Dominic. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Steig, W. (1976). Abel´s island. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Stevenson, R.L. (1978). A child´s garden of verse. Glasgow

Stevenson, R. L. (1982) Treasure island. London: Hennerwood.

Thomas, D. (1954). A child´s christmas in Wales. New York: Holiday House. *

Wallace, I. (1985). Chin Chiang and the dragon´s dance. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre.

Wilde, O. (1965). The happy prince. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. *

Wilder, L. I. (1932). Little house in the big woods. New York: Harper & Row.

Wilder, L. I. (1935). Little house on the prairie. New York: Harper & Row.

Zemach, H & Zemach, M. (1973). Duffy and the devil. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

APPENDIX C

STORIES WRITTEN ON THE COMPUTER, NOVEMBER- DECEMBER, 1985.

Jimmy and the big machine.

Once there was a leprechaun called Jimmy, who had many brothers and sisters. He was the youngest. He loved to bounce around and play in the fields. But there was one problem, humans were coming to live in the field. They were going to build a house on top of Jimmy´s hiding hole where he hid his toys from the older children. He saw a big truck and a bulldozer coming towards him. He was frightened. He scrambled out of his home in the ground to save his toys. But he was a bit too late and he got picked up by the bulldozer!

It was teatime and the leprechauns´ mother called for them to come . There was an extra seat at the table! There were only nineteen little leprechauns for tea today. Jimmy was the twentieth. Everyone jumped out of their places to find Jimmy. They looked in his hiding hole because they knew where he loved to hide, and they found his toys. They heard a squeal and they looked up. They were just about to be swept up by the big machine. The little leprechauns quickly ran but one of them got picked up. Jimmy said "Now I´m not worried because you´re here Sammy." Just then the driver got out of the cab for tea.

Mother had a plan to get them down. She whispered in the children´s ears. She got the children´s trampoline, and she called "Jump Jimmy and Sammy!" They couldn´t hear her. She whispered in the children´s ears again and said "One, two, three..." All of them shouted out together "JIMMY SAMMY, JUMP!" This time it worked. They closed their eyes and jumped and they landed with a soft bump right on the trampoline. They all went home and had their tea. But Jimmy never did get his toys back. At least he was safe.

The builders finished the house and the Taylors moved in. They planted a garden in the summer and it soon grew very big. The people could never understand what happened to all the vegetables they grew. But they never knew about Jimmy and all his brothers and sisters.

Jimmy´s big adventure.

One day Jimmy the leprechaun went for a walk in the field. It was stuffy inside the hole and he needed some fresh air. He liked to take walks and he wanted to go down to the river valley, but his mother wouldn´t let him because he was too young. Jimmy was feeling naughty so he ignored her.

As he was skipping along he saw some people having a picnic. The food looked good. Jimmy picked up a piece of orange that he saw on the ground. He loved oranges. "Aaagh it´s dirty" said Jimmy. He decided to take a drink from the river and while he was getting it he heard a train go past. It gave him such a fright that he fell right in! Jimmy had

only just learned to do doggy paddle so he tried to keep his head above water. Just then a log floated by and Jimmy grabbed onto it...

It was almost bedtime for the little leprechauns and it was getting dark outside. They got their pyjamas on and got into bed. "Oh oh where´s Jimmy again?" asked mother. They quickly put their sweaters on, took their flashlights and went outside to look for Jimmy.

Meanwhile, the log was drifting towards the river bank. When it got closer Jimmy reached out and grabbed a reed and then climbed out onto the damp grass. By now he was very wet and cold. He knew he should have listened to his mother and he wished he was at home in his warm bed. "I recognise this place" said jimmy. He walked a little way. He saw a hollow tree that he had seen before. He walked a little further and he saw a house that he seemed to know. Jimmy saw a little spot in the distance. He saw a little face that he seemed to know. It was his sister Danielle carrying a flashlight. He started running towards the light and he saw his mother´s face too. He ran faster. He felt very happy as he ran into his mother´s arms.

They started to walk back home and on the way Jimmy told them how he fell in the river. When they got home they took off their sweaters and had some hot chocolate and then got into their warm, snuggly beds. Jimmy still didn´t understand how he went a long way down the river but ended up near home. Then his Mum told him that the river goes around in a big loop right near where Jimmy fell in so it just carried him back nearly where he started. Then mother told them to snuggle under their covers and go to sleep.

Jimmy the pest.

It was a hot summer day. It was too hot for Jimmy to go outside. He nagged his Mom to make popsicles, and she said "Later!" Half an hour later he asked again, but it was Saturday and that meant it was cleaning up day. Jimmy decided to dust the bookshelves. Oh-oh all of a sudden there was a loud crash as all the books came falling down. One of the books broke the china tea set. "JIMMY go to your room!" shouted his mother.

Even though it was hot outside Jimmy decided to climb out his window. He started running, but wait, where would he go? His new hidehole? He didn´t have any food there so he couldn´t stay very long. But no, maybe he could sleep in the Taylor´s house. There would probably be some food there.

He ran and he ran to the human´s house. There was a little space under the door that he could creep under. He had to watch out because the humans were still awake. They also had a cat called Mr. Muldoon. Jimmy tried to find the kitchen but he couldn´t see it so he carefully climbed onto a bookshelf, so that he didn´t make it fall like he did at home. He climbed higher and higher until he could see the

kitchen. He found a big paper plane on the bookshelf so he climbed on it and flew down.

"Who flew that paper plane?" said Mrs. Taylor. "Not me!" "Not me!" "Not me!" Jimmy was frightened. Quickly he scattered around the corner and went to the kitchen. But he wasn´t big enough to reach the cupboards where the food was. The Taylors were just about to paint the kitchen and they had a ladder out by the cupboards so Jimmy tried to get up the first step. Oh dear, he did not make it. Then he remembered that he had some string in his pocket so he looped it round the first step and then he climbed up it. And so he went up and up. He quickly snuck inside the cupboard because he heard Mr. and Mrs. Taylor coming back with the paint. He found some graham crackers and he gnawed away at them.

All this time the little leprechauns were just getting their pyjamas on and getting into bed. GOSH where is Jimmy AGAIN? "This time" said mother "I´m not going to go looking for him." Mother started reading to them.

When Jimmy had finished eating the crackers he jumped off the cupboard and went downstairs where the cat slept. But the cat was sleeping outside. So Jimmy climbed into the cat´s box and soon enough he was fast asleep. As soon as it was dawn Jimmy crept up the stairs and out the back door where there was another hole underneath the door. He ran and ran to the hole and crept through the window.

There was a big crash, and all the leprechauns woke up with a fright. JIMMY! All the leprechauns went dancing round the room. Mother came in to see what all the fuss was about. "Jimmy!" she exclaimed "I´ve been worried about you. Let´s all go into the kitchen and have some pancakes." "No thankyou" said Jimmy "I´m full of graham crackers." "Where did you get those from?" asked mother. "From the human´s house." said Jimmy "You did?" said mother "Tell us about it" So he did, but no-one really believed him.